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The Men of The Hudson's Bay Company

MAY 2nd, 1670

By N. M. W. J. McKENZIE

MAY 2nd, 1920

The Author and Mrs. McKenzie (standing)
His eldest sister, Mrs. Wright (sitting)
Photographed in Stromness, Orkney, April 1914

Compliments of

The Men
of the
Hudson's Bay Company

1670 A.D. - 1920 A.D.

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By N. M. W. J. McKENZIE
FORT WILLIAM
ONTARIO

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By N. M. W. J. McKENZIE

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PREFACE

My father was Alexander McKenzie and my mother's maiden name was Elizabeth Campbell. We were a family of nine, four boys and five girls. I was the fourth boy and the sixth child of my parents, and was born on a farm in Cairston, near Stromness, Orkney, on the 5th day of December, 1856, and spent my early childhood on the farm along with my other brothers and sisters. We were brought up first as Reformed Presbyterians, and later belonged to the Free Church, and were strictly raised in the elementary rudiments of the Christian Religion with family worship in the home. I was educated at Hourston's school in Stromness, and was apprenticed to John Wishart as a joiner or carpenter in my sixteenth year, and with him served my time learning the trade.

N. M. W. J. McKENZIE.

May 2nd, 1920.

INTRODUCTION

A great deal—and rightly so—has been written about the Honorable Hudson's Bay Company, their Governors, Deputy Governors, and Committee, also of the Gentlemen Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay; their Chief Factors, Factors and Commissioned Officers generally. But very few of the writers have given much attention to the actual labourers, working men, voyageurs, half-breeds, and Indians of the service, who have made possible and practical the celebration of the 250th Anniversary "in this year of Grace on May 2nd, 1920," of the longest lived commercial company in history.

After all said and done, those MEN were the bees that made the honey; and in the following pages of this work I have given special attention to the MEN to whom this book is dedicated. I hope the reading of these pages will be interesting to many of my contemporaries as well as others who may recall many incidents and pleasant memories of those true friends of ours, who may have passed to the "Great Beyond," those companions and comrades in the "MEN'S HOUSES," on the Prairies, Rivers, Lakes, and Solitudes which resounded the echo of the joy and sorrow, mirth and laughter, and brotherly affection of the MEN of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Fort William, Ont.,
May 2nd, 1920.

N. M. W. J. McKENZIE.

The Men of The Hudson's Bay Company

CHAPTER I.

From my earliest boyhood recollections the annual arrival of the Hudson's Bay Company's ships, at Stromness, in the Orkney Islands, and the lammas market were the great events of every year. The ships, three of them full rigged sailing ships, had kept this annual visit up since 1670. Generally they came direct from London laden for Hudson Bay, and usually stayed for a couple of weeks in order to pick up all the young men who had been engaged under five year contracts, for service in North America, all of whom were collected here prior to the arrival of the ships. These men came from the Highlands of Scotland and the Orkney, Shetland, and Lewis Islands. One ship would be bound for Labrador, one for York factory, and one for Moose Factory, each ship taking its own quota for its own port of destination. The Company always secured their men from these Islands as they had proved to be the best for the service in North America. However, each man had to pass a very high medical examination before he was engaged, and only those found physically fit under severe tests were accepted. They had to be between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five years, and were classified as clerks, carpenters, boatbuilders, blacksmiths, coopers, tinsmiths, sloopers, and labourers. All had a chance of promotion in the service in accordance with their demonstrated capacity and ability in the service.

All of the ships took on some cargo here, also any parcels or boxes from the parents or friends of any of the men who had gone out in the service in previous years. The captains and officers held high carnival during their stay, having dinner

parties on board and ashore, and dancing every night. And yet, despite all this gaiety and cheer there were many salt tears shed by fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, and sweethearts, when the hour of parting came, as many of them knew they were parting forever. There was always a salute fired from our battery of 32 pounders on the point of Ness, for each ship, on their arrival and departure, and of course the ships responded. They sailed out Hoy Sound with the ebb tide and passed within seventy-five yards of the battery, the whole population assembled and cheering as only Islanders can cheer.

My turn came in 1876 but I did not come out by the Company's ship. Before the ships arrived at Stromness, a telegram was received by the Company's agent to forward three carpenters and the same number of blacksmiths by express to Quebec; so the agent picked six of us who were all full-fledged journeymen and came to Glasgow with us where we just made connection with an Allan Line steamer called "The Parisian." We had a pretty rough trip part of the way and it took twelve days to land us at Point Levis. The Company's agent there informed us that we had to report for duty at Fort Garry, and shipped us up to Montreal on a fast river boat. Montreal being the Company's Headquarters in Canada at that time we were outfitted with blankets and other necessary articles for our inland journey. The officer in charge gave us some letters for Fort Garry, supplied us with sufficient transportation funds, saw us to the station and on the right train, and we were off for the West. Crossing the St. Clair river at Sarnia we passed through the States by several lines of transport until we reached the Red River somewhere in Minnesota, where we took passage on a disreputable looking barge, loaded with goods to full capacity, and floated down the river until we finally arrived at Fort Garry gate, twenty-two days after leaving Quebec, where we were met by Chief Factor McTavish. I handed him our Montreal letters. He gave a grunt and said that he had been expecting us for several days. Then, turning

to one of his clerks, he said, "John, take these men to the men's quarters and give instructions that they be comfortably looked after." Then turning to us he said: "John will take you to the men's quarters and you will all report in the morning at my office, at 9 o'clock sharp—when I will give you further instructions."

We were the first batch of men to come through by this route to Fort Garry from the old country and were consequently the centre of interest. We did not get much sleep that night as the men we met at the quarters, about thirty of them, were all from the old country, and anxious to hear the news from their native land. They also swapped yarns with us on their experiences enroute from York Factory by York boats to Fort Garry. Of course we were "greenhorns," a name applied to all men in their first year in the service, and they filled us up with weird stories about Indians, scalps, and all kinds of thrilling adventures. Of course, the Rebellion of 1870 was still fresh in their memories and we got the whole story that night of all the murders, shooting and hair-breadth escapes which they had come through, all told for our special benefit. This was our initiation ceremony on our first night at Fort Garry. They also informed us that the barge on which we had arrived belonged to Jim Hill and that the cargo all belonged to the H. B. C.

You have all heard of Jim Hill. He was a Canadian and was at that time building the Northern Pacific. He went to the States when a boy and made his start with an old scow, freighting coal. Transportation was his hobby. Donald A. Smith, then chief commissioner of the H. B. Co., and Hill were very great friends, and through their efforts this new route for transportation to Fort Garry was accomplished. You may not all know that the Hudson Bay Company's main forts such as Fort Garry, Portage La Prairie, Fort Ellice, Fort Pelly, Edmonton, Prince Albert, were built on the main rivers and waterways, all of which emptied into Hudson's Bay, and only

McKenzie River into the Arctic Ocean. These forts were all supplied from York Factory by brigades of York boats, from these several points—which in their turn supplied the inland posts within their own district—using carts and oxen, wagons, pack horses, boats and canoes, dogs and every available form of transportation imaginable. A complete chain of moving freight from York Factory to MacKenzie River, Fort Garry and all other points. The system was perfect—although in many cases very prmitive. The goods did not reach some of the inland depots until two or three years after they had left York Factory, so that there was always two years' supplies in the country in case anything should happen to the ships coming into the Bay. All these goods were moving in the summer time, but those which did not reach their destination were taken on inventory as wintering en route. All these outfits were kept distinctly apart in the annual accounts under the heading of advance outfits. They were warehoused at the various depots intact—were never opened or touched unless in cases of emergency, but were moved on to their destination in the year they had to be disposed of according to mark and number.

The same routine of transportation was carried on from Moose Factory for the southern department—and they were also allowed two years' supplies in the country. The goods were all called pieces, each piece weighed 80 lbs., and each man had to carry two pieces across the portage and make a good many trips before they got their cargoes over. It took all hands to bring the York boats over, running them over on rollers and skids which were left there for that purpose from year to year. This work was being done on all the rivers and lakes all summer at the same time, hundreds of men employed—principally half-breeds and Indians—who got fat on the job.

Such was the wonderful system of transportation for the interior of the great Northwest Territories for over 200 years, and which was practically all abandoned in 1880, railways

taking the place of the York and Moose boat brigades, except around Hudson's Bay and the far Northern posts, which still look for the arrival of the ship as the great annual event. They still carry two years' supplies for their own districts at Moose and York Factory, although the ship has never missed her annual visit in two hundred and fifty years. The great councils of the Company in the early years were held at York Factory and Rupert's House. They were presided over by the Resident Governor and consisted of all Factors and Chief Factors who were then called the wintering partners. They always legislated for the following year. In subsequent years the great councils or courts were held at Michipicoton and Fort William for the Southern Department, and at Norway House and Fort Carlton for the Northern Department.

The last great council was held in Winnipeg in the Queen's Hotel in 1887, and was presided over by Chief Commissioner Wrigley.

Fort Garry, instead of being an inland post, became in 1878 the Headquarters of the Company in the Dominion of Canada.

I had almost forgotten that the six greenhorns that arrived yesterday are still in the Men's House at Fort Garry. Sharp at nine a. m. did we enter the Chief Factor's office, caps in hand and heads erect. "Good morning, boys," said he, in affable tones; and then without further parley went on, "Two of you will remain here for duty, the other four will proceed to Fort Ellice along with the Cart Brigades that are now loaded, and will start this afternoon. Murdoch McDonald, who is in charge of the Brigade, will now take charge of you and will take you to the store where you can get anything you may require for your personal use for the trip, and which will be charged to your private accounts."

I was one of the four who had to hit the pike. The Factor seemed to be very busy or ardently wished to be rid of us as he lost no time in shaking hands with, and bidding us good-

bye. He said he hoped we would like the country, and become good and faithful servants of the company. We saw no more of him. Hundreds of Red River carts and oxen were starting that day all loaded with from eight to ten hundred pounds of general merchandise, some Brigades for Fort Ellice, others for Fort Pelly, Qu'Appelle, Edmonton and Prince Albert. This was the opening of the new inland freight route. It was raining; and talk about mud! You never saw anything like it. The cart trail led straight down the present Main Street of Winnipeg, and we could see oxen mired carts sunk down to the axles, and men hip-deep in the mire, trying to get them out. It sure was a mess and the whoops and yells of the drivers, and the whole scene was something new for us. We rather enjoyed it.

Our brigade started about 4 p. m. We got as far as where the City Hall now stands and there camped for the night, and some of our oxen's horns could just be seen sticking above the mud. Murdock was directing his men and swearing at them in Gaelic and every other tongue that we did not understand—all of them plastered with mud from head to foot.

When things were pretty well straightened out we asked Murdoch where we were going to sleep. I shall never forget the look of disdain he gave us as he said; "You will sleep or lie awake, whichever you please, under that tam cart; and another thing, you'll not get any supper tonight whatever, so you can go to bed now as we will be starting out of this tam hole about daylight, and we'll have our breakfast after we cross Colony Creek."

This being all Greek to us we said nothing but, after it got dark we hiked for the men's house which was only a couple of hundred yards away, and got something to eat from our friends of the night before.

Our brave Murdoch was before us, and was playing the bagpipes for the boys, to beat four of a kind. They had given him a few drinks and he was as happy as Souter Johnnie or

Tam O'Shanter and "didna care a whistle." He had been ten years in the country at that time and was used to all phases of the game. He was very good to us all the way up to Fort Ellice and did not ask us to do any work on the trip except to get wood, make a fire and boil the kettle while he and his men were looking after the oxen and saddle horses.

We were now in the Indian country and there were lots of them about. One of the blacksmiths and myself were held at Fort Ellice, and our two companions were sent forward to MacKenzie River. They got only as far as Carlton that fall and had to winter there.

The headquarters of Swan River District, which was Pelly, was transferred to Fort Ellice in 1874 in order to accommodate the new transport route with better facilities for inland distribution. Many new buildings and warehouses were required—Chief Factor Archie McDonald was in charge of the District and I served under him for over thirty years. The men's houses were one-story log buildings with thatched roofs. There were about thirty-five white servants at the post at that time, all laborers except the officers and clerks. The blacksmith and I had a house for ourselves. A big two-and-a-half-storey house in the centre of the fort was occupied by the officers and clerks. A sixteen foot stockade with bastions and cannon mounted on each corner enclosed about five acres, but was seldom used.

I built a great many warehouses and stores as well as dwelling houses at the different posts in the District during my first five years' service, and put traffic bridges over many of the rivers. Two deserters from the United States Army turned up one day in rags, and hungry. They did not know or care where they were going—they wanted a job. It was Sunday and the Union Jack was flying—it had the letters H. B. C. on it. One of them looked up and said, "Say pard, what do those letters stand for?" The other one said, "I guess that means half-breed company." But his companion shook his

head, "No," he says, "I guess that ain't right, pard. It seems to me by the look of things 'round here that those 'ere letters stand for something like this, "Here before Christ." They were both hired and made good men for the Company—one of them died in the service; I lost track of the other.

I was on a trip with one of these men some years later in the winter. We each had a train of dogs going from Qu'Appelle to Wood Mountain, and were caught in a blizzard at the "Pile o' Bones," near where Regina now stands. A great many Indians died from smallpox that year, and after struggling through the blinding snow we came finally to a place where several of them had been deserted and had died after they had contracted the disease. We could go no further and there was no shelter, so we made a stockade out of about a dozen of the corpses and had a good windbreak for ourselves and our dogs for the night, as the snow soon drifted over us.

Next morning, the storm having abated, you may rest assured we lost no time in getting away from our gruesome camp bright and early.

Horse stealing used to be a favorite past-time among a certain class of the men, and those caught were generally forced to pay the penalty.

On one occasion I saw three horse thieves who had been strung up the day before and riddled with bullets, in Moose Mountain. That's what we called dancing the Red River Jig in mid-air. We passed on and left them hanging.

There were always little Indian wars cropping up—once a band of the Fort Ellice Indians went out to the Moose Mountain to hunt. They got too close to the line and a party of American Indians stole their horses and all their young girls. They got after the offenders and caught them, and although a number of our Indians were killed in the fight, they brought back all their young women and their horses with a few added —together with fifteen scalps of the gros ventres, or big bellies as they were called. Buffalo were plentiful in my first year's

service and I have seen thousands of them. Many of the old freighters have told me often when the buffalo were traveling south that they had found it necessary to halt their Brigades of carts and camp for one or two days until the herd had passed. Of course they would pick out the choicest ones or as many as they required for grub on the trip.

I saw where buffalo in the fall tried to cross the Saskatchewan River. They went through the ice, but the ones behind forced the others on, tramping them to death until the dead bodies of the animals completely bridged the river, and on these the balance of the herd passed over. Buffalo follow the leader like sheep, but the millions that used to be all disappeared in a few years. There is a herd of about 250 still in the MacKenzie River Valley, and another bunch in the Government Park at Wainwright, Sask. They call them Wood Buffalo. They have not increased in MacKenzie River at all as the Siberian wolves get among them and destroy the calves.

After the buffalo had disappeared the plain Indians, who numbered many thousands at that time, were reduced to starvation. Many of them died, and the Government of the day had to gather them all into Reservations all over the country and ration them. Living in small log houses containing but one room was a great change from their roaming open air life on the plains and they became the victims of all kinds of diseases, consumption being their greatest enemy. Better houses, industrial schools and more sanitary conditions stamped out the disease to a great extent, and today many of the Reserves are in a prosperous condition. The Indians have been educated in the growing of grain and raising of cattle and horses—many of them being wealthy, industrious, and good loyal Canadian citizens today, competing successfully with the white man at many of the industrial fall fairs in the four Western Provinces, and carrying away many of the red tickets from many of the fair grounds.

The number of horses an Indian had determined his wealth, some of them having as many as three or four hundred and quite a number of these in the Buffalo runner class, which were the top notchers of the plains. A horse in that class was never put to any other work. He had to be extra long winded, tough as steel, and swift and able to stay right along side of a stampeding herd until his rider had shot down ten or fifteen animals with a single barrel muzzle-loading flint lock shot gun, using No. 28 ball instead of shot. The rider also had to be some artist in quickness at re-loading. As a rule these horses stood about fourteen and a half hands, and weighed eight to ten hundred; their sires were all imported thoroughbreds. The most of that breed have gone to the Happy Hunting grounds, where the Indian says the Buffalo have gone.

The great disturbing events among the Canadian Indians during my time were the Riel Rebellion of 1869-70; the Custer Massacre by the Sitting Bull Sioux hordes in 1876; the disappearing of the buffalo followed by the placing of the Indians on reservations and the second rebellion of 1885 by Louis Riel who was later hanged in Regina. The Indians had nothing to do with the first or second rebellion. Western Canada has been settled without any serious Indian trouble or bloodshed; she has treated her Indians always fairly and honestly, never breaking faith with them. Much credit is due the Hudson's Bay Company and their officers in this connection, as through their efforts the Indians were partially civilized and allies of Great Britain long before settlement began to pour in. There is no longer any danger of any half-breed or Indian uprising in Canada.

The C. P. Railway entering the country greatly facilitated our transportation in the Interior and over the vast plains of the now western provinces. I had many narrow escapes on the lakes and rivers through storms and blizzards on the great plains during my many inspection trips and voyages throughout the length and breadth of the Dominion. My work in re-

cent years took me several times well within the arctic circle and up to within eleven or twelve degrees of the Magnetic North Pole.

Dear Reader, in my introductory preface and all through this chapter I have given you glimpses of what you may expect to find as you read on. I hope you have found my company and story interesting so far, although I am leaving you now to go ahead with my main story and blaze the trail. I hope that your interest will increase as we journey along through the many scenes which I will faithfully endeavour to portray of actual things that have taken place and people with whom we have lived and personally known all through life whose true brotherhood and friendships are stronger than death, and will never cease to exist. I am sure the whole book will amuse and greatly interest you and may possibly bring forth a word of commendation for the now aged author.

CHAPTER II.

In the summer of 1876 I arrived at Fort Ellice, direct from Stromness, in the "Pomona" of the Orkney Islands, in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, in the capacity of carpenter, at the rate of forty pounds sterling per annum and two pounds extra as a gratuity for the purchase of tea and sugar. Otherwise I was supposed to receive board and lodging such as obtained, and was the usual custom of the country in the Company's service. Labourers at that time received twenty pounds and two pounds gratuity and had the same accommodation as the mechanics in the shape of housing and cooking utensils. We were allowed a Buffalo robe, otherwise we all had to buy our own blankets and such other bedding as we thought we required, and were able to procure. The above, in short, is a synopsis of the contracts of all mechanics and labourers, duly signed, sealed and delivered in the Lewis and Orkney Islands, and you had to work your passage from the place of embarkation to the point of temporary destination, and afterwards follow up your luck in propelling yourself in an armstrong or legstrong vehicle from Fort to Fort in conjunction with other servants of the Company, whose instructions and duties might point in the same direction. The term of service as per original contract, was for five years. So John Morrison, blacksmith, and myself, turned up at Fort Ellice, tired and homesick, having walked all the way from Fort Garry, a distance of 250 miles, trying always, though foot-sore and weary, to keep in touch with the Brigade of ox carts, loaded with food, to which we were attached for the trip, so that they might guide and feed us until they handed us over to the officer in charge of the post. Were the worst of our trials over or only just commencing? We did not know nor very much care. We were homesick good and plenty. Of course we were Mooniassacks or greenhorns, as all the first year men were nicknamed, and did not know the ways and customs of

the country, or its inhabitants, if any such things existed. But in a very few months we found out there were WAYS and CUSTOMS, and then some. Homesickness had to be cast aside and abandoned: we were under contract—a most solemn engagement to our young minds—for five years; and no matter what the circumstances had been or would be, or what conditions might arise, we would stick together and face it like men. So John the blacksmith and I spread one Buffalo robe on the rough slab floor of the men's house, lay down on it, and pulling the other robe over us, said good night to each other. But neither of us went to sleep until well on in the night, and our thoughts were in Stornoway and Stromness, and I have no apology to offer, as any of my readers who have had such experiences as I have already related, now going on forty-five years ago, will understand the feeling and emotion which filled our hearts and souls on that memorable night—under the protection of an old Buffalo robe.

The Boss, Chief Factor Archie McDonald, was not at the Fort on our arrival, being away on an inspection trip through his district, and was at that time making his round somewhere in the vicinity of Fort Pelly. His second in command, David Armit, was the only white man we saw. (By the way he happened to be an Orkney man, and had then been eight years in the service.) I was as glad to meet him as if I had found a shilling. He was also glad to see some one from the homeland and I was able to give him some fresh Orkney news, especially as I knew all his people and he knew all my people, so we had a real talk to each other in the old Orkney dialect, which made me feel altogether different in my new surroundings. Among other things he told us that all the white men were down the valley about six miles making hay, and would not be back to the Fort before Saturday night. He told me that there was also a few Orkney and Lewis men among them who would be glad to see us, as some of them had not heard from home for a long time.

Fort Ellice at this time was considered to be a very much Inland Post. Only recently had it been able to receive any communication from the outside world, except by way of York Factory, and then only once a year. My fellow countryman took us through the blacksmith and carpenter shops and told us to look around and familiarize ourselves generally. He advised that we rest up and enjoy ourselves as best we could, and make ourselves at home as he would not start us to work for a day or two. He then left us, as he said he had to unload and re-load some of the carts in the Brigade with which we arrived. He was, he said, starting them all off to Fort Pelly that afternoon with the new outfit of goods for that Post.

John and I watched and helped in the loading of the carts and saw them all pull out for another 120 mile dash to Fort Pelly. We bade all our tripping companions (with whom we had become well acquainted, since leaving Fort Garry) good-bye, and listened to the weird squealing of the Red River carts, long after they had disappeared from view. This being Thursday we were again left to the solitude of our own reflections until the other men returned from the hayfields. As there were but few Indians around these men felt quite disposed to converse with us. But we could not understand them, so I got John to break forth in a Gaelic dialogue with them, and brought forth great bursts of laughter from the youngsters who were listening. The nature of the discourse has never been interpreted, neither did I understand any Gaelic at that time.

Fort Ellice was built on the south bank of the valley of the Assiniboine River. It was a beautiful location with charming and lovely scenery, and rested about three miles down from where the Qu-Appelle River emptied into the Assiniboine and about a mile from where the Beaver Creek flowed round the back of the Fort into the same river. The banks of the Beaver Creek Valley were of equal height to those of the Assiniboine Valley, and those were from 150 to 200 feet high. The Assini-

boine Valley was about two miles wide and that of the Beaver Creek about 1000 yards. So the Fort was built on the top level between the two, on a beautiful plain dotted with little poplar bluffs, high and dry, with numerous springs of beautiful cold water gushing up at the top of the level in the face of the banks. The river in the center of the valley winding its crooked way in snake like twists to empty itself later on into the Red River, thence to Lake Winnipeg, thence to Hudson's Bay and the Atlantic Ocean, was all the way from 200 to 500 feet wide, having good high banks of its own. But very often in the spring freshets it overflowed its banks and spread over the entire valley, making a very formidable looking river indeed. At such times it did a lot of good in the way of irrigation. We were always sure of a good hay crop when the river overflowed in the spring.

The Fort was built in a large square, the big front gates being about thirty yards from the brow of the bank which was very precipitous at this point, and well wooded with small trees, ferns of all kinds, and saskatoon bushes. Raspberries and other berries were also numerous along the banks, and in the valley, when in season. On one side of the square was a long row of one-storey log buidings, with thatched roofs all joining each other. The carpenters shop was at one end of this row and blacksmiths' shop at the other. The doors or entrances all facing to the Fort. There was the men's house, the mechanics' house, the native servants and dog drivers' houses, also the married servants' houses, each of which as I have mentioned consisted of one large room in size suitable for the number of servants supposed to occupy any one of them. A door opened into each from the outside and there was no other means of entrance to any of the other houses in that long row of buildings, except by its own door or down the chimney. Two tiers of rough bunks round the walls were the sleeping accommodations, while a large mud chimney, open fire place, provided ventilation. We also did all our cooking at the open

fireside. On the other side of the square, in an equally long row, built in the same style, were warehouses, ration houses, dry meat and pemmican house, flour, pork and beef house, and a well appointed dairy, with a good cellar and lots of ice. These buildings were one-and-a-half storeys high and were without chimneys or fireplaces.

On one side of the big gate in front was the trading store and district office, and on the other side the fur store and reserve stock warehouse, each of these buildings were very long and substantial, fully one-and-a-half storeys high, and had been shingled the previous year, the shingles being manufactured by Indians and half-breeds in the carpenter shop the previous winter, with the aid of axes and draw knives. They could make the shingles very quickly—I was quite surprised to see the finished article. I must say the shingles were well made and lasted for years, giving a perfectly tight roof. The main building in the Fort was the Boss's or the "big house," as it was called, being the quarters of the Officers and clerks. It stood well back in the square, its front being in line with the end of the long rows of buildings on either side, so that every house in the Fort could be seen from its front windows. It was a two-and-a-half-storey, 60x40 feet building, with a large kitchen behind, built from the same plan as the officers' dwellings in Fort Garry, and known as a Red River frame building. It was made of 8 inch logs, 10 feet long, set in a frame. It had a nice balcony and verandah, the main entrance being in the center of the building, and opening into a large recreation and council hall. The boss's private office was to the right, and the parlour or sitting room to the left. Large mess room, dining room, and private bedrooms were in the rear. Upstairs was a large hall and reading room, and bed rooms for the clerks. The upstairs was heated with large Carron stoves, as well as the hall downstairs, and the trading shop and district office. The same mud chimneys—two of them—only more elaborate and massive than those belong-

ing to the other buildings were in the big house. There were four fire places on the ground floor, and another in the kitchen, as well as a large cooking range. A splendid mud oven stood outside for baking bread and cooking extra large roasts. There was also a fine well close at hand with the proverbial oaken bucket attached to a rope and chain. The big house and kitchen were thatched, and all the houses were mudded and white washed with lime, altogether they presented a good appearance from a distance. A four foot side walk ran all around the square, and another one from the front gate to the front door of the big house. There was a nice vegetable, flower and kitchen garden of about an acre behind the house. The flagstaff stood at the front gate, and the Belfrey stood outside the Boss' private office. A high stockade enclosed the whole square, so that when the big gates were locked at night there was no danger of losing any scalps before morning.

It was not my intention to give such a lengthy and detailed description of the fort, but those were the sights that John and I took in at intervals while we were expectantly waiting the return of the men from the Snake Creek hayfields on Saturday night: and we were now standing on the bank gazing down the valley, and saw a band of horsemen riding toward the fort. Mr. Armit and Henry McKay, a clerk in the store, came out and joined us. They told us that the men approaching were from the hay grounds and were coming up for their rations. It was only a short time till they were with us. Dismounting, they removed saddles and bridles from their horses, hobbled them and turned them out to graze.

Mr. Armit said: "Boys, you have to make a good smudge tonight for the horses and cattle, as the mosquitoes have been pretty bad for the last few nights."

"Surely," says Little Donald the blacksmith, who was the boss of the haymakers, "Antoine and Baptiste, you will see to have the smudges going before sundown, in fact, you

better start them up at once so that our horses will not wander away too far."

Then John and I were introduced to the bunch in the usual short order style, and we were henceforth part of them. "How did you get along this week?" asked Mr. Armit. "First class, sir," replied Donald, "I think next week will finish all the cutting and cocking, we have quite a stack already built, and the new byres are all wall high, ready for the roofing, and the cattleman's house for wintering in is all ready for mudding. And how are your Indians doing out at the muskeg?"

"They are about half through, and we have quite a few loads in at the byres. There are four hay frames hauling in from there, and we are having splendid haying weather, but it looks a little cloudy tonight, and the flies have been so bad lately that we may be delayed soon by rain. However," he added, "it may blow over."

Then, as if by some impulse, we all began to move towards the men's quarters. As Mr. Armit turned to the left towards his office Donald wheeled round and called, "Oh, I say, Mr. Armit, old Borresseau will be here in about half an hour with a horse and cart to take down next week's rations for the camp, and I wish you would start him back right away and give him rations for three extra Indians who are starting in to work on Monday."

"All right, Donald," returned Mr. Armit, "I'll see that the old man is fixed up as soon as he gets in and return him to camp tonight."

"Antoine and Baptiste want to ride over to the Mission tonight," said Donald. "They'll stay with some of their friends tomorrow as they expect Father De'Corby to arrive from Qu'Appelle tonight, then they'll go down on the other side of the river tomorrow afternoon, and pick up the three Indians who are starting to work with us on Monday."

By this time the rest of us had reached the Men's house—some having gone in and started a fire in the open chimney

preparatory for supper. That supper consisted of tea, sugar, bannock, pemmican, and dried meat, to which John and myself were invited to sit in with the others and have a cup of tea. After supper, all the Lewis and Orkney news having been gone over many times, some one proposed that John Ferguson sing a song. He consented and it certainly was some song, evidently one of their favourite ditties, as every one in the room except myself joined in the chorus. My friend John the blacksmith giving full vent to his pent up Gaelic with the utmost joy. They were all good singers and sang a number of good old Gaelic songs that night. There were also a number of good Scotch and English songs sung, and everyone of us seemed to enjoy the evening and the re-union of song and story. Some one had just finished reciting Tam O'Shanter when one of the loudest claps of thunder I ever heard in my life seemed to burst right over the house. The storm that was looming up in the afternoon and evening had come with terrific force. We could see the flashes of lightning quite plainly coming down the chimney. The roar of thunder was almost continuous, and in five minutes the rain came down in torrents. The boys said it was a cloud burst and that we had not got the worst of it.

Fort Ellice was said to be the worst place in the country for thunder storms, standing as it did on the nose of the hill between two deep valleys, but they all said it was the heaviest storm they had seen for years, and more than likely something was struck near the Fort. And sure enough the morning disclosed one of the largest trees near the Fort splintered from top to bottom. Two horses and one of the work oxen were also victims of the storm's violence. It only lasted about an hour but I never saw or heard anything like it before or since. The old hands who had seen many storms in the country admitted it was a bad one, but said that it would clear the air and tomorrow would be a fine day, and all hands agreed to turn in for the night. So, bidding them all good night, Little Donald, John, and myself moved out and passed in through the next door into our own quarters, and cuddled up in our Buffalo robes into the arms of Morpheus.

CHAPTER III.

All hands were up and about next morning in their Sunday duds, and out on the bank which seemed to be the favourite place to forgather to smoke a pipe and view the scenery in the valley below.

"Let's all go for a walk round the nose of the hill," says Jamie Stewart, and the whole fifteen of us started for the proposed stroll. This seemed to be a favourite promenade for everybody, judging from the appearance of the well-worn foot-path along the edge of the bank. We passed through a nice little poplar bluff, and by the byres, where the perfume of the new-mown hay which had been recently hauled in from the muskeg was most refreshing and pleasant to sniff in the early morning. We were walking Indian file, some talking, some whistling, and some humming some lines of the ditties of the previous night, when we suddenly emerged from the bluff and were on a beautiful little plain as flat as a billiard table. We were right at the nose of the hill, or the hog's back as they called it, and a more perfect view of the valleys beneath would be difficult to imagine. We were, here, at the same time, on the banks of the Beaver Creek and Assiniboine River. The view gave me at least a thrilling feeling of ecstacy and delight, which fairly made me yell, "Oh, how beautiful!" I was at the same spot hundreds of times after that, but never felt again as I did on my first view of the wonderful picture that Sunday morning. We all sat down and lolled around on the brow of the hill for an hour or so and then turned our way homewards again, up the banks of the Beaver Creek as far as the site of the old Fort, where there was a beautiful spring from which we all enjoyed a refreshing drink. The Fort was moved from this site a few years previous, to where Fort Ellice then stood, and the original name of the Fort was Beaver Creek Post. We came down the trail back to the starting point, having gone completely round the Fort, and had walked a distance of about

four miles and enjoyed every foot of it. Now we were all ready for our midday meal, which the boys soon had on the table. In the course of conversation during the afternoon I found that the contracts of several of the men in the district expired that summer. Some of them would be leaving for the Old Country that fall, and one of them was Donald McLeod, the Fort Ellice blacksmith, while others would settle down in the country round the different posts as freemen on their own hook—for better or for worse. They would in any case remain under the Union Jack, which was floating proudly in a light breeze at the top of the flagstaff in the square, with the large letters "H. B. C." in white against its background of red, white and blue on the bunting, whereupon the boys all sang in good English, "Three Cheers for the Red, White and Blue," this being about all the English some of them could give utterance to.

God bless them all, for they were certainly loyal to the company, and to their, at that time, queen and country. Those were the sentiments and class of men that made friends and allies of the Indians, and held Rupert's Land and the Great North West Territories for the British crown. Again I repeat that the men of the H. B. C. and their connecting affinity with the Indians made the peaceful settlement of the North West Terriories possible and aptly practicable. Many people in the country today do not know nor realize how much they are indebted to the sagacity, honesty, faithfulness and bravery of the men of the H. B. C. throughout the whole territory for the peace and comfort they enjoy today.

After supper the hay-makers started back again on horseback to their camp, all wishing John and I the best of luck till we met again, saying they were all glad to have met the both of us, also glad that we were to be stationed at Fort Ellice for a time at least. Mr. Armit told John and I, after the men had gone, that we better start work in the morning. There were several horses to be shod, some guns and steel traps to

be repaired, which John would turn his skill and attention to, and I would start making some window sashes to take the place of several parchments that served as windows in several of the buildings. There were also a lot of broken panes of glass, which he would like me to replace with new glass, in all the windows of the Fort, where they were required. There were also floors and shelving and counters required in some of the stores, which he would show me the following day.

He also said that he would supply me with two or three Indians who always worked around the fort, and were very handy at rough carpenter work—and if John would require any assistance he would be able to give him the help of a handy man also. We were both very glad to start work and went to it the following morning at our respective workshops. My three Indians turned up all right, at least I thought they were Indians, they were three husky fellows, and could speak a little English with a strong Scotch accent. They were told to come and work with me, and that was what they had come for. They said they were some of the pit-saw men that had pit-sawed most of the boards that I saw piled around, and that they had also worked with Jacob Beads when he was building the Boss' house. They could, they told me, hew logs, build York boats, scows, Red River carts, make snow shoes, dog sleds and many other accomplishments in the wood working line, "because Jacob learned us since we were boys." There was, it appeared, nobody could beat Jacob because he knew everything. I found out afterwards that this Jacob was the great authority on the various lines mentioned by them, also a first-class workman. I afterwards saw many samples of his handiwork which was both mechanical and substantial, so my new friends and fellow workmen were not talking through their hats.

Jacob was an old man. He had made many trips with the Swan River Brigades to York Factory. He was a half-breed, and a highly respected servant of the Company. I

never met him, he died at Fort Pelly, but his name was not allowed to die for many years afterwards. He was one of the landmarks that served the Company well.

I sent two of the lads to glaze up all the broken windows. The other one and I started to straighten up the workshop, as it was very untidy, not having been used for its own purpose for some months.

There was a splendid workbench fully equipped, and my companion remarked after looking silently at the bench for some time, "Jacob made that with his own hands." And many other things in the shop which we were arranging brought back memories of Jacob, in fact "J. B." was stamped on many of the tools in the shop that was now the property of the Company, but had formerly been the private property of Jacob.

We ground up and sharpened tools all forenoon, on a very excellent grindstone that had also been used by Jacob. John was pounding away on the anvil. Horses were being brought to and taken away from the forge by John's helper. Everything was getting familiar, and I started my man with the rip hand saw on the wood for the window sashes, having previously taken the measurements. That evening we reported good progress all round, having sorted out the lumber required for the flooring and shelving already referred to. We played quoits in the evening with horse shoes. John and I both being beaten, and to console us by rubbing it in, one of the glazier competitors told us that Jacob could beat any of them easily as he nearly always made a ringer, he was such a sure shot.

John and I used to practice behind the bluff after that and soon were able to take our place against any of them. John later on in his spare time made a standard set of quoits with which we could put up a better game, as they did not have the habit of rolling all over like the shoes. Many tight competitions and good shots, interspersed with ringers were recorded. There seemed to be a lot of Indians arriving and pitch-

ing their tents on a small plain some distance behind the Fort, and the clerks seemed to be very busy around the trading store, this being the first large number of Indians, squaws, youngsters, dogs, horses, travois, carts and other equipment that I had seen. But my duties at the moment prevented me from anything but a casual glance as they were coming and going to and from the trading store. My man, "Savage," said it was Chiefs White Bear and Way-Way-se-cappow with their respective bands, and they had to come in from the plains to trade as well as to pay the Fort a friendly visit, and to have a Council meeting with the Boss.

In the evening we went out to see the camp. The tents of each band were pitched clear and distinct from each other, but quite close together. The tents were made of dressed Buffalo leather, and the principal ones were painted on the outside with all manner of Indian men on horseback and all kinds of totems of the band. They were going to have a dog feast that night; the kettles were all boiling and steaming, hanging on tripods over the fires. Outside where the feast was to take place the tom-toms, or drums and rattles that were to provide the music, were already beginning to make themselves heard, and the dogs were howling in chorus. All being ready, the Indians seated themselves in a large circle on the grass, around the fires where the feast was in preparation. Everyone brought his or her own cup and plate, and set it in front of where they were sitting, ready to receive his portion of the dog meat, tea and bannock, as soon as the Master of Ceremonies instructed his assistants, who were all inside the circle, around the fires and kettles going through all kinds of ceremonies before the serving process began—which was also the sign for the musicians to get into action.

It did not take long for the contents of the kettles to be demolished, and amid grunts of satisfaction all round the circle, some warrior would get up, walk into the circle, and give a great oration on his deeds of valor; how many of the enemy

scalps he had taken, the number of horses he had stolen, and the number of young girls he had stolen and carried away, during many of his adventurous trips on the warpath among the enemy tribes, the valourous deeds of whom were as chaff compared to his own great feats of daring, etc., etc.

The speakers were not limited to time, nor questioned as to the truthfulness of their harangue; but each one was supposed to outdo the previous speakers and the imagination was drawn upon in most cases to its very depths. The chief purpose was to be entertaining and none of their statements were ever challenged or questioned. There was generally a smattering of truth, to give it colour. Each speaker got a great ovation from the circle when he finished speaking, dogs and drums joining in the applause. Anyone was privileged to get up in his place and dance, not moving his feat, but with up and downward motions of the body, and swaying to the rythm of the drums and reed whistles. Sometimes the whole circle would rise at one time and go through these various motions, and the Indians' yells of hilarity, which you could only appreciate if you heard them, were almost continuous.

And thus went on the merry dance, feast and pipe of peace, during the entire night, and until sunrise next morning. Following the feast silence reigned in the camp for a number of hours. Everyone was happy and content: the dog feast had been a success. This particular feast appears to have been a farewell party as the two bands of Indians parted company a few days afterwards. Way-way-se-cappow and his band, pitching off, went North to the Lizard Point and Shell River country, while White Bear and his band went South to the Moose Mountain country, all being equipped at the Fort for the Fall hunting of large and small game and fur bearing animals. On the evening following the feast we were all sitting on the bank as was the usual custom of the men, officers, and clerks, when a few minutes after sundown I heard the first whip-poor-will song, in its flight up and down the valley. The

word "whip-poor-will" was as clear and distinct as if spoken or sung by the most musical human voice. I was told that this bird had never as yet been heard farther West than Fort Ellice Afterwards I often stood on the bank in the evenings and listened to the ever fascinating call of this shy night bird. I heard him in later years in the Qu'Appelle Valley, where the echo of his song could be distinctly heard, which made it all the more interesting and thrilling. I never heard the whip-poor-will in any other part of the country, and I do not know if the species is extinct or not, and further I cannot say I ever saw the bird save as he flew up and down the valley, thrilling his most wonderful song.

There were thousands of wild pigeons in the vicinity of the valley and bluffs at this time, and pigeon pie was a favourite dish with us, especially on Sundays when we had lots of time to prepare and cook it. In a few years these splendid birds had disappeared altogether from the country, and I understand are now entirely extinct. Years ago they were there in millions.

The main posts in Swan River District in 1876 were, Fort Ellice, Fort Qu'Appelle, Fort Pelly, Touchwood Hills Post, Egg Lake Post, Shell River Post, and Riding Mountain House Post. The Red River Riel Rebellion of 1869-70 had caused a good deal of unrest among many of the interior Indians, but treaties had been made with most of them, by the officials of the Dominion Government, many of whom were ex-officers of the Company. Things had become fairly normal again, and had so remained until the eventful summer of 1876, when General Custer and his whole army were massacred by the Sioux Indians under Sitting Bull and his confreres. This was entirely a United States affair, but the terrible and sometimes exaggerated news had a visible effect on the Canadian Indians, which took some time to allay, as the Sioux were at that time the sworn enemies of many tribes and bands of the Canadian Indians, and were continually at war with the United States

soldiers, culminating with this terrible General Custer affair, after which they came over the line into Canada and received the protection of the Canadian Government.

So long as they behaved themselves and obeyed the laws of the country they received reservations of land for those who wished to settle in the country as British subjects, otherwise there was no formal treaty made with them as was with our-own Canadian Indians. The Sioux Chief, Standing Buffalo, on the reserve at Fort Qu'Appelle, who was a savage pagan and barbarian in 1876, is now, in 1920, a paid up life member of the Red Cross Society, and has always been a good H. B. C. man during his residence in Canada. What do you, gentle reader, know about that?

The Boss, Chief Factor Archibald MacDonald, drove into the Fort with his buckboard and team, a bunch of loose horses being driven by the two horsemen which accompanied him during his inspection trip. The horses were warm and steaming, showing that they had all come at a good pace. Johnnie Brass and Joseph Boyer, both half-breeds, also Company's servants, both good horsemen and lariat throwers, and expert dog drivers, after unhitching the team and putting the horses away in the stables, came into the house and introduced themselves. They said they had a pretty hard trip. The flies were bad, and they had to be up so much at nights to keep the smudges going for the horses. They were very tired, so after drinking a cup of tea, they both retired to sleep.

We did not see anything more of the Boss that evening, as I suppose he was also tired, and Mr. Armit was also in conference with him in his private office, until a late hour.

CHAPTER IV.

Early next morning the Union Jack was flying. The Indian chiefs, their councillors, and several of the buck Indians were in the Fort waiting to see the Boss. They had not long to wait, as he was up and around early. He met them in the square, shook hands all round, then invited them all into the Council Chamber in the Big House, where they all remained the greater part of the forenoon, among other things arranging for their fall advances. Little Donald, the blacksmith, also arrived from the hay camp about noon, to report progress, and get some more grub for his crew. He was very anxious to start for Scotland, but the other men from the various Posts who were also going home, would not arrive for a week or ten days yet, so Donald concluded to camp at the Post that night as he wanted to see the Boss before he went down again. Haying appeared to be progressing at all the posts, and the freight was duly arriving at the different Posts in good condition. There were brigades of carts passing East and West almost daily, while survey parties were arriving and departing with supplies, this being the headquarters for all kinds and conditions of people who were coming into the country at that time.

The men in the trading and other stores were all busy, and there seemed to be a hum of commercial life and activity all round the place. This continued for several years during the summer time as everyone coming into the country at that time were all moving westward ho, and had to pass Fort Ellice en route, which made Ellice a very important point for general as well as Indian business; very often taxing men and supplies to the limit and extent of fullest capacity to give service to all passing customers. Mr. Armit came over one evening and said the Boss wanted John, Donald and I to go over to his office. So away we went, Mr. Armit introducing us. The boss seemed to be all right and said he had been around inspecting the work that was done since our arrival and seemed

quite pleased with the quantity and quality of the work he had already seen. He then said he intended to build a bridge over the river this winter, at the same time drawing a plan from his desk, he spread it out before us.

It showed three piers in the stream, and one in the face of each bank—the total length of the bridge 326 feet, width 12 feet, specifications called for lots of bolts and iron. It was in regard to the bolts and iron required that he wished to see the blacksmith, so that he could get all bolts, etc., prepared as quickly as possible; thereby avoiding any delay when the construction started after freeze up. The Boss told him he would get the specifications from the office in the morning, so John was disposed of. Then, turning to me, the boss explained that all the heavy timber was on the ground, and he had engaged old Joseph Robilliard, a freeman and ex-servant, who was a first class man at heavy work of this kind. Robilliard would be foreman on the bridge construction, which would not start until the river had frozen sufficiently to allow us to work on the ice. "But," he says, "Donald here is going home, and I want you in the meantime to take his place in charge of the haymakers. Donald will go down with you in the morning and stay with you a few days. The work is well advanced now and it will not take very much longer to finish the hauling and stacking. You will also take the three Indians who have been working with you, as I want a few more buildings put up, as we may have to winter more cattle here than I had previously provided for. I will try and get down next week to see how you get along, and you can come back with me, Donald, as the other men will probably be here about that time, so that you can all start for the old country together."

Then turning to Donald, "Donald you had better get all the rations put up tonight so that you can get an early start in the morning. No time should be lost as it is already showing signs of fall, and we may have an early winter." Thus we were disposed of. We started early in the morning, leaving

the Fort at half past four, in lots of time to see the sunrise. There were about thirty Indians and their families in the camp, chiefly Sioux, a few Salteaux and the white men and half-breeds who had paid us the visit at the Fort. They were just starting work when we arrived. Donald put the three men who had come down with us at work repairing some of the hay frames which had become broken in places, so that they would be ready for use when required. We then took an inventory of all the property under his charge, which chiefly consisted of scythes, wooden rakes, hayforks, handled axes, kettles, tin cups, and other cooking utensils, and some tents, hay frames, oxen, horses and harness, together with various hanks of Babbiche and Shaganappi, without which no outfit was complete for repair work.

There was lots of hay on the flats still uncut, but seven or eight men were swinging the scythes, others raking and cocking, some hauling the hay to the yard, and a couple of good sized stacks were already topped and made rain proof.

This was the daily routine, interspersed with meals and smokes at stated intervals. There were sufficient small poplar logs on the ground with which to build the extra byres (stables). By adding another handy Indian to the three we had taken down with us, placing a man on each corner, we were in about a couple of weeks or so, able to complete the buildings ready for the winter. When the Boss came down to see how we were getting along, he was well pleased with the progress we had made. He galloped about on a fresh horse, and inspected all the hay grounds up and down the valley within two or three miles of us. One of the old squaws had boiled the kettle, and had a cup of tea ready for him when he got back to camp, where Donald and I were busy putting the finishing touches to the top of the stack section that had been hauled in that day. Donald went back to the Fort with him as some of the men who were going home to the old country had arrived the previous evening.

So Donald bid us all good bye, and they both started back at a hand gallop. Donald got to Stornoway all right, re-engaged the following year, and was sent out to MacKenzie River District, where he did good service for several years. Thirty years after that I met Donald at Prince Albert, a freeman with a fine blacksmith shop of his own doing a good profitable business, and was well entertained by Mrs. McLeod and himself. They had quite a large family of boys and girls, most of them grown up to manhood and womanhood. Neither of us had forgotten the haymaking at Snake Creek.

The winter set in early in October but everything was in ship-shape, lots of hay, ample stabling accommodation and cattle sheds, houses all mudded and tightened up for the winter; firewood hauling and cordwood cutting, feeding cattle and horses, and many other duties giving ample employment to the few men who were to winter at the Fort. Dog trains, dog drivers, Indians, trading and bridge building gave occupation to all and sundry for the following eight months. Hughie McBeath, Henry McKay, J. C. Audy and Angus McBeath were among the best of the clerk dog-drivers; and among the labourers were Gowdie Harper, and his brother, Allen McIvor, Jordan and several others—all white men. The regular men for all winter were Johnnie Brass, Joseph Boyer, Charlie Favel, Johnnie Beads, Johnnie Daniels, Sam Geddes, Henry Brass. They were the best in the district at that time for long distance and speed. Of course, before and since their day there were others just as good, who could tell hair-raising stories of the miles they had covered in a day, of the blizzards they were caught in, of the cold they had withstood, of the hunger and privation on some trips, of running behind their sleds in 40 below, clothed only in a thin pair of mocassins, pants, belt and cotton yacht shirt, no underclothing, cap or mitts—while others spoke of breaking the road on snowshoes in front of the dogs, how dogs came to be your affectionate companions on such trips, how they curled around you in camp, after you had

cleared a place to lie down on, using your snowshoe as a shovel; the many dog fights and the dog life generally, were the chief topics of conversation during the winter season. Then coming towards spring, the many degrees of snow blindness would be freely discussed by all. They were all good men, and such had proved themselves in many a tight place, and on many a stormy trail, always trying their best to get there and back again the quickest way they knew how, very often travelling night and day to make their objective on time. Dog drivers as a rule could not stand the strain many winters; they soon became subject to varicose veins in the legs from overstrain and running, as also happened to many of the men who went to York, from carrying excessive weight over the portages. Very few of the old voyageurs and dog drivers escaped having varicose veins. These were all good men of my time in the Swan River District. Other districts had men of equal ability and endurance. There were also many Indians who could make a good showing, and if his dogs could not come through he would run into camp himself, to show that it was his dogs and not himself that was played out.

Four dogs were the usual team on the prairies and 400 pounds was the regulation load for a freight trip, blanket and feed for self and dogs extra.

The greatest of all trips was the winter mail packet from Montreal to the mouth of the MacKenzie River in the Arctic Ocean, by dogs. The Packet had to go through on time at all cost. Each Post had to rush it along to the next Post without any delay, except taking his Post letters out, changing the dog trains and flat sleds, lashing the loads and rations, etc., signing the way bill, then Marche. For instance, Fort Garry would send it to Riding Mountain House, R.M.H. to Ellice, Ellice to Qu'Appelle, Qu'Appelle to Touchwood Hills, Touchwood Hills to Carlton in Saskatchewan District, and so on. Three men and two dog trains generally ran it through, the extra

man always ahead on snowshoes when the snow was either too deep or too soft for the dogs to make time.

This was the trip that proved who the best man and the best dogs were for that winter, and their fame would be all over the country before next winter. So history was being made and written down in the diary of every Post, recording all these events, as they came on and retired from the stage, record being kept of all the actors as the men passed along with the years.

By the New Year the new bridge was well under construction, all the piers were built and loaded with rocks and stones of all dimensions. John, the blacksmith, had all the bolts and iron work well advanced and Joseph Robilliard had all the timber in shape and framed according to plan.

So the day before Xmas we had the structure all ready to receive the stringers, which were 14 inches by 14 inches by 40 feet long. There had been a bridge built here a couple of years before, but the material in it had been too light and it had not been built high enough. When the "break up" came the ice and high water carried the whole thing away first shot. We were not going to make any such mistake about this one. All the material was of the best, and as strong and substantial as wood and iron and human ingenuity could make it. We had the bridge finished some time before the break up. It stood the test of the heavy ice and swift current without a quiver. All hands were down at the River watching the ice breaking itself after it had run up the slope of the iron sheathed piers, and then passed down the river.

The river rose many feet in an hour or so, but did not reach the stringers, although some of the ice at the very highest period of the water in rolling and tumbling hit the railing of the bridge. But the men, using pike-poles, kept pushing it under, so that there was practically no damage to the bridge when the river was clear of ice. It was declared by the Boss to be a substantial and safe structure for public traffic and he

formally declared it open for business by being the first one to drive across it, with his buckboard and team.

The following winter we built a similar bridge over the Qu-Appelle River about three miles up stream from its mouth, and the following winter another bridge about twenty miles farther up the stream, opposite the mouth of the Scissors Creek. We also built many small bridges over creeks and bogholes on many parts of the new trails that were then opened up for the transportation of freight to Posts inland from the rivers.

Christmas week was a regular holiday. No work was done during the whole week except feeding and looking after the animals. Everything else was subservient to festivities and making merry.

Christmas was regularly observed in the Fort, but New Year's Day was the great day for the Indians. The Boss was a great disciplinarian, the service being at that time still semi-military. As to rules and regulations, you might break all the ten commandments in one clatter, but to break any of the rules or regulations of the service—that was quite another thing.

So it was quite understood from time immemorial that those rules and regulations were never strictly enforced during the Xmas holidays, and the whole staff and all the men respected the time-honoured concession and did not in many cases take any extreme advantages of the privileges accorded us by custom at this festive season of the year.

The Boss and Mrs. McDonald always gave one dance in the big house to all hands on Xmas night, with a big supper and plenty of other refreshments. Then there was a dance every night at one of the other houses in the Fort and plenty of nice things to eat and drink, the bulk of which was contributed and sent over from the big house. Old Bill Moore, an old English army soldier, was cook at the big house, and produced all the fancy cakes and pies, also a lot of grumbling about his extra work, while the men's quarters produced lots

of tea, sugar, and bannock for the feasts. Many life-long friendships were made throughout the whole service during Xmas week, and all the time-honoured songs and dances were annually revived, and it was customary at every Post on the 31st of December, as soon as the clock struck midnight, to toast the New Year with highland honors and sing in chorus, that favourite old song, "Where are the Boys of the Old Brigade?" and

"Where is now that merry party
I remember long ago,
Sitting by the Christmas fire
Heated by its ruddy glow—
They have all dispersed and wandered
Far away! Far away!" (Repeat).

Those two songs on New Year's often brought tears from the stoutest hearts among us, perhaps the boys were arriving at the sympathetic stage, which several passed through during Xmas week, anyway the tears rolled and our good wishes had flown away on their wireless errands of good luck, to the men of other Posts and Districts, and we had done our duty and kept up the ancient custom as it was entrusted to our care by our predecessors.

The Boss, clerks, and men all mingled together that week. The whole service was permeated with this friendliness or rather a sort of Masonic Brotherhood, which held all H. B. C. men bound to each other no matter what Post or District they belonged to, so long as they were H. B. men they were received by other H. B. men with open arms, and the best they had was none too good for them. It was a case of

"Shoo! Fly, don't bother me,
For I belong to the H. B. C."

We all had a good time. The week passed quickly and the Rules and Regulations were again in force, and we were all ready to resume our daily toil and do our duty, unflinchingly in the interests of the H. B. C.

So started the Year of our Lord 1877, in Queen Victoria's reign, and in the 207th year of the Company's age, the company whom many of our forefathers had faithfully and honestly served, and passed to the Great Beyond, having done their duty.

It had been a good winter for hunting all over the District and the fur returns were fully up to the average. The Spring rat hunt was very good and the health of the Indians had been generally good.

Scows were built at Fort Pelly and batteaux at Fort Qu'Appelle with which to bring all the returns of the District down to Ellice. From here all the scows were loaded to capacity and floated down to Fort Garry with all the District returns, one of the old York Factory guides being in charge of the navigation, and a responsible clerk in charge of the cargoes.

The scows were abandoned at Fort Garry and the men returned with the Swan River carts. This was the routine for a few years until the steamboats began to come up the Assiniboine River as far as Fort Ellice, and relieved us of the summer freighting by ox carts from Fort Garry. Fort Ellice then became the stamping ground of freighters for a few years until the C. P. R. came through, when freight was hauled from the nearest station to the Post it was consigned to. When Red River carts and freighters disappeared from their old routes and became a thing of the past as far as freighting was concerned, wagons and teams being then extensively in use for transportation of goods and supplies from the railway stations, this was what was called the **changing conditions** of the **country** which kept on changing all the time, and was the source of much perplexity and loss to many of the old timers who depended on freighting for a living.

Geese and ducks used to proclaim the arrival of Spring anywhere from the 15th to the 21st of March. Five shillings was the prize for the first goose brought into the store, and one pound of tea for the first duck. The men generally got a

holiday for hunting in the Spring, and many fairly good bags of ducks and geese were brought in and proved a real treat after the long winter.

The thatched roof was taken off the big house that Spring and replaced with a shingle roof; the house lathed and plastered with lime and sand, as well as several of the other stores, so that the old system of mudding had not to be resorted to every fall and men could be employed at more profitable work.

The stockade all round the Fort was also lowered about three feet, the ends which were in the ground having become more or less decayed, the very high stockade being no longer necessary for protection against the Indians.

The whole Fort presented an altogether better appearance after all these repairs and improvements were completed. The hay season was drawing nigh, and I was again detailed to take charge of the haying outfits and the same thing also fell to my lot in the following year. We had mowing machines, hay rakes and wagons to go to work with then. It took less time, fewer men and gave better results, and greater satisfaction than the scythes, and we could get the quantity of hay required secured and put up in a great deal better condition, fireguarded and safe, before there was danger of prairie fires.

Mr. Grahame was Chief Commissioner at that time, and held an annual council with as many of the commissioned officers as could attend at Carlton. Mr. McDonald went up with him to Council every summer. The Chief Commissioner's trip was the sensation of every summer. There was as great a rush in his journey as there was in the winter packet, both of them being of the highest importance. Horse relays were stationed some days before at points along the trail, so that whenever the drivers unhitched they had fresh horses to go right along with. The discarded horses remained there under the care of a keeper to take up duty again on the return trip. It was very hard on some of the horses which were perman-

ently injured. This annual trip utilized the services of quite a number of the engaged servants, the best and smartest fellows being always retained, half-breeds and white men who could be thoroughly relied on to have all the stamina and grit to do all the duties required of them either by night or by day, during the entire trip. Few failed except through sickness or accident, and then not often. John Ferguson made several trips as cook, and they said he was a good one. Often he would have the meals all prepared in the democrat while going full speed, and the kettle was always kept boiling at the relay stations so that tea was invariably ready on their arrival, and John would have the spread all ready as soon as the horses were unhitched.

All commissioned officers were promoted step by step, up all the grades of the service, in most cases according to merit. Apprentice clerks being the first grade, that entitled them to sit at the officers' mess. Donald A. Smith was chief commissioner for a short time before Mr. Grahame. Both of them entered the service as apprenticed clerks, the former reached the high position of Governor in London of the whole service and died in harness. Mr. Grahame retired.

At those great councils of commissioned officers, the programme and policy for each district for the following outfit was discussed and determined. Rules and regulations were amended or rescinded and a general working schedule adopted and determined regarding supplies, transportation, staff, servants' wages and welfare of Indians, hunters and trappers, tariffs, freight rates—in fact everything that could be thought of to enhance and advance the Company's interests.

They were all partners in the business and of course were naturally very much interested in the proper conduct and most economical adjustments that would meet the requirements of the various Districts and Posts under consideration. Servants and clerks were frequently transferred for duty from one Post to another and frequently from one District to another, some-

times for their better training in some other branch of the trade for which they might show signs of having special qualifications, as well as to have a wider experience of the trade before they were promoted or entrusted with greater responsibilities. The hope of becoming a commissioned officer was the objective of every clerk and servant who had any ambition and the requisite ability. This feeling among the servants was the undoubted strength of the company and created that great brotherhood that existed among all its servants, and which has been so often commented upon and wondered at by outsiders.

CHAPTER V.

In 1878 or 79, after the Carlton council, Mr. David Armit received his commission or parchment as it was generally called, raising him to the first grade, above senior clerk, carrying with it the title of "Junior Chief Trader." This was the last commission granted in Swan River District during my time. Of course there were other promotions from time to time, such as mechanics and labourers to Postmasters and clerks, and senior clerks, each grade bearing a small advance in salary, but none of them carrying the coveted parchment. In 1887 the last great council of the commissioned officers was held in the Queen's Hotel, Winnipeg, at which nearly all commissioned officers of the service were present, and presided over by Chief Commissioner Joseph Wrigley, when for the first time it became officially known to the rank and file of expectants for promotion, that no new commissions were to be issued to any clerks or servants, who had entered the service since the completion of the transfer of the country to the Canadian Government, which took place in 1870. This very startling information threw a wet blanket over the entire service, and produced in many cases very unfavourable results in the Company's interests. These I need not here rehearse, further than to say that it always has been, and is today, conceded by all in the service who are in a position to know, that it was one of the biggest mistakes the Company ever made when they decided to cut out granting commissions. The only interest the majority of their servants have had in the service since then was their weekly, monthly, or annual salary. I have been through it; from one end to the other I have seen it; I know it to be so, and closing this subject, I will leave it at that.

I have landed you now, dear reader, about ten years ahead of our story, and you will have to hark back again with me to the good old days of the commissioned officers' regime, and the loyal men of the service who were expecting commis-

sions up to the time of the last great council already referred to.

David Armit was transferred to the charge of Riding Mountain House; J. C. Audy to Shell River Post; George Drever from Fort Qu-Appelle to Fort Ellice; John Calder from Fort Pelly to Fort Ellice; Hugh McBeath from Fort Ellice to the winter charge of Egg Lake Post; Henry McKay to Fort Qu'Appelle. These were all clerks, labourers, and others, Donald McKinnon and Murdoch McDonald from Fort Pelly to Fort Ellice, and several other transfers throughout the District. Similar transfers were also taking place in other Districts as well. John Ferguson, Sandy McCauly, Norman McKenzie and others had become freemen and settled on places of their own.

Murdoch McDonald had a fine set of bagpipes and played them well. Donald McKinnon was in charge of the milk-cows, oxen and young stock that were kept around the fort, and had lots of trouble, during fly season in rounding them up at milking time, and making smudges which sometimes had a habit of becoming smokeless. At such times the cattle would go helter skelter through the bush, and many mornings Donald could not find them high or low. However, he seldom gave up the search until he found his milkers.

Birthdays were always recognized at the Fort and some kind of congratulory celebration indulged in. On this occasion it was the Boss's birthday, and a handshake and best wishes was in order all round; but having a piper on hand gave us a better chance for a greater display of our loyalty, and Murdoch was parading with the stately step of a piper up and down the center sidewalk in front of the big house playing his best highland airs, the Boss with evident satisfaction on his face enjoying the Strathspeys and reels that Murdoch was so proudly producing. Murdoch's face and eyes were ablaze, his steps were measured, slow and steady, and on his head the McDonald Glengarry cap, set on one side. He screwed his pipes and gar'ed them skirl till roof and rafters a' did dirl.

Donald had not been fortunate that morning in finding his cows, so he came rushing into the Fort with his breath on his lips and looking as excited as if a band of Indians were after his scalp. "Well, Donald," said the Boss, "where are the cows this morning?"

Donald, who was a big man, gave his arm a swing to the westward and said, "Och, sir, they are off hellwards and may the devil take them to hell if he should only make a mile a day."

"Tut! Tut! Donald," said the Boss, "why did you come back without them?"

Donald gave him a look of utter astonishment, "My God man!" he exclaimed, "did not I hear the pibroch sounding, and this your own birthday? How could I stay away and not be wishing you many happy returns of the day, same as the others?"

The Boss took his outstretched hand, shook it heartily, and said, "Thank you, Donald."

There was a little drop of mountain dew and when the celebration was over Murdoch got a little drop extra to put in the chanter, as he said the reeds got very dry sometimes, when the pipes were not frequently used, and a little spirits was the only thing that would moisten and revive them, so that a Chief Factor could listen to them with pleasure. The dinner bell rang, and the serenade was over.

A short time after the transfer of the country to the Canadian Government, proclamations were issued intimating the fact, which began with the words, "Victoria by the Grace of God, defender of the faith, etc., etc.," which were sent to every H. B. Post in the country to be posted up. In Saskatchewan District there were two posts which nearly equalled each other in the volume of business and profits each year. Sometimes one post was ahead and some years the other. The postmanagers were continually striving to outdo each other, both posts being in the A1 class, each postmanager upholding his post

as the superior one. The name of the one post was Whitefish Lake, and that of the other Victoria.

In due time the proclamations arrived; the one for Victoria Post was duly posted up in the office. When the other proclamation reached Whitefish Lake, the manager there became enraged at the Victoria postmanager for his insulting impertinence in daring to take precedence over his post which had succeeded in doing the best trade (that outfit), and immediately erased the word "Victoria," in the proclamation and printed in its place in red ink, "Whitefish Lake, by the Grace of God, etc., etc." He had the proclamation framed and given a prominent place in his office, Whitefish Lake and the H. B. C. evidently being of far greater importance to him, than any other names in Canada or the British Empire. He was a half-breed, born in the vicinity of the Post and dearly loved his birthplace, and the Company, and would acknowledge none other save "Whitefish Lake, by the Grace of God."

The annual treaty payments to the Indians were made at the Posts for several years, and the summer trade at all the Posts during the treaty time was lively and full of enjoyment, all the Indians assembling and indulging in all kinds of festivities and feasts for a week or ten days, or until such time as they had spent all their money, and gone through their Sun and Medicine dances. In later years their payments were made on their respective reservations. Many free-traders attended the treaty payments and competition was always keen, the Indians paying much less for their purchases during the treaty than at other seasons of the year, and were able to start on the fall hunt, fairly well equipped.

Quite a number of settlers were now coming into the country. The buffalo were beginning to disappear from the plains, many of the old hunters returning in the fall with only partially loaded carts of pemmican and dry meat, and some returning without having killed a single buffalo. The news from the plains was not of a very encouraging nature, but it was

expected that things would be better the following year, and there was always the treaty in the summer time to look forward to, and plenty of fish in the rivers and lakes. Besides there were plenty of moose and deer, and wild fowl in abundance, so there did not appear to be any danger of a scarcity of food for man or beast in the immediate future. Settlers were flocking into the country, following up the surveys, pushing westward looking for homesteads, passing for hundreds of miles over the very best land, but expecting to find something better farther west, many of them going ahead of the surveyors and squatting on much inferior land, than what they had passed over. This practice caused unnecessary isolation in many cases, and later on privations which only the early pioneer settlers can understand. The immense country swallowed them all up, and being so scattered, it took some years to realize the extent of immigration going on and scattered all over the length and breadth of the country from Fort Garry to Edmonton, and beyond. It was only necessary to ask any stranger one met whether he came from Huron or Bruce, and it was invariably either one or the other.

We had a series of wet seasons from 1877 to 1881, rivers and sloughs full and running over and teeming with all kinds of wild fowl. From spring to fall there were all kinds of pea vines, grass, hay, and an endless variety of flowers and from the highest hill you could see no end of the immense size of the country, North, South, East and West. It really sent some of the settlers crazy, and I knew of several who had to be sent out to an asylum, they could not stand the vision of the prosperity and wealth that they were mapping out for themselves and families. In many cases it never got beyond the vision. After this there was a period of dry years which continued until rivers, creeks, lakes and sloughs were all practically dry. No water anywhere. If you were going on a trip over the plains, you had to carry water and use it sparingly.

A story is told of this period of drouth when a large camp of Indians and half-breeds were crossing the plains accompanied by an old and venerable Priest. They could find water nowhere. Many of the children were dying of thirst, in fact, the whole camp was in a panic of despair. They knew of a lake some distance ahead and they tried to reach it; they could not travel during the day on account of the excessive heat, so they had to push forward as best they could in the night, the Priest, an open bible in his hand and his head with its streaming white locks bared, leading them at a slow pace. About daylight they reached the place where the lake had been, but it was dry, nothing but great open cracks in the dry mud, showing that no water had been there for many days, and the footprints of the Buffalo which had been there also, in quest of water while the mud had yet been soft.

The weaker ones of the camp did not arrive for some hours later. For several hours the priest prayed and cried to God for relief from the dreadful thirst that was consuming them and the animals, when suddenly the hot scorching sun of the morning went under a cloud, the whole sky became overcast, and the heaviest rain any of them had ever seen began to fall. They were saved, and the lake contained a foot of water inside of an hour.

The great draw-back to the early settlers were their frozen crops, and the dry seasons which put many of them out of business altogether. They were forced to leave the country, some of them selling their homesteads for enough provisions to take themselves and their families out of the "God Forsaken Country," as they called it. Those were the days when you would not give twenty-five cents for all the land you could see across. It was simply of no value under the then existing conditions, for three or four years in succession. It was lucky that there were no more settlers in the country at that time to enhance the hardships that many suffered in the early days of settlement.

I have seen frost on the great wheat plains of Saskatchewan at some period of every month of the year. These fields rarely, if ever, know of any such thing as summer frosts now-a-days. The climate has certainly changed for the better during the last forty years of my experience. There was little attention paid to summer frosts prior to settlement and grain growing times, as there was nothing to destroy except the wild fruit blossoms in the early summer, which was a great loss to the natives. The tradition then retained amongst the Indians from time immemorial, were either extreme wealth, or extreme poverty throughout the plains section of the immense territory. There was no medium, and no sense of economy. They made no provision for a rainy day, but lived as they listed from generation to generation, and on the whole they seemed to have less worry in this life than the civilized or semi-civilized peoples.

Outside of the general brotherhood and friendship that existed and was taken for granted among all the Hudson's Bay men wherever they met each other, there were men in the service who formed and cemented lifelong friendships that were as strong as death, and remained loyal to each other no matter where they were stationed or what their positions. Under all conditions and circumstances that friendship never failed, and did not have to be called to attention either. It was wonderful to know and to feel that you had such genuine friends, that you could trust implicitly with anything. Such friendship one knew by intuition. Words were not required to declare it, and it was this kind of friendship which existed between George Drever, John Calder, and myself, from the day of our earliest acquaintance; and all through life it never was impaired. We three had many pleasant days and nights together, at Fort Ellice and Fort Qu'Appelle, at our work and at our play. All the same, this did not interfere in any way with our comradeship and friendliness towards all the others with whom we came in contact; for instance, Murdoch, Donald,

John, Norman, Angus, William, James, and all the other boys. We were all Jock Tamson's bairns, and each enjoyed the other's company to the fullest extent, as comrades and fellow H. B. men, if that will make the distinction which I am trying to explain more easily understood.

Drever was a baker by trade, but he came out in the service as a labourer. He taught many of the boys how to make bread and cake when the material for their construction was available. He had been promoted to postmaster, and again to clerk and interpreter, and was in charge of the sale-shop and the Indian trading. He was recognized as the best trader in the service, and he could speak the language (Salteaux) perfectly, and would often puzzle an Indian in his own tongue.

Calder came out as an apprentice clerk, and was in training to be made accountant for the District, a position which he afterwards filled with great credit to himself and profit to the Company, both at Fort Ellice, and later at Fort Qu'Appelle, when it was made the headquarters of the District, from which Post he was transferred to Winnipeg, where he was appointed the chief accountant of the whole service and still holds that responsible position.

Drever retired from the service at the age of 60 years, in 1912, after a wonderful and successful career, which I will have occasion to refer to many times before I finish this work. He retired from Abitibi Post in Lake Huron District, and went back to live at Fort Qu'Appelle, where he died at 5 p. m. on July 11th, 1916. He was buried there in the cemetery on the top of the south bank of the valley, on July 13th, 1916. John Calder attended the funeral. I was unable to attend on account of distance.

Murdoch gave us lots of music in the evenings, with his bagpipes, when after supper we had all assembled on the bank overlooking the picturesque country. The Indians would also collect and take in the free open air concerts. John, the black-

smith, was becoming an expert on the chanter, but could not handle the pipes. Nearly all the half-breed boys played the fiddle, Calder played the piccolo, and Drever was a good performer on the flute, so we were never stuck for dancing music when that was required, which was sometimes pretty often, as they all enjoyed dancing. The fiddle was always taken along on a trip. I have seen some of the boys at noon or in the evening, when on freighting trips, take the tail board out of a Red River cart, throw it down on the prairie, and step out the Red River jig with the greatest gusto to the tune being played by one of the men sitting on a shaft of the said Red River cart, just to keep themselves in practice for the next dance on their arrival at the Post of destination, where they would introduce some new steps and dances to the delighted damsels, whose affections were courted, and often secured by the most demonstrative performers on occasions of this kind.

Anyone arriving on a trip from another Post or District, was always the signal for a dance, no other invitation being necessary. Such was the custom of the country. The people you visited were always delighted to see you, and entertain you somehow as long as you remained in sight—then "change partners, and balance to the next."

In the meantime, and in connection with my other duties, I had built two new dwelling houses, and converted the old church into a boarding house, which was presided over by Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Warwick and her sister, Miss Johnston, for the better convenience of the travelling public. The Company's men also had their meals here after this, sleeping at their own quarters. Mrs. Warwick ran the house for several years. Ben took up a homestead near the Fort and they both made good money out of their venture, and did a big business with incoming settlers and other travellers. I also built two large warehouses at the foot of the hill, at the steamboat landing, large quantities of freight coming up the river

at that time for surveyors and settlers as well as for the company. A. H. Bastien was put in charge of the warehouses. It kept him busy checking in and out, and during the time the boat was unloading he had to be supplied with additional help.

Every old timer in the country has passed through Fort Ellice, and in those days it certainly was a busy place, so much so that the Company had a town site surveyed and town lots were sold. The C. P. R. location line was located by Marcus Smith right up the valley, and Fort Ellice was to be nothing less than the Capital of the Great North West. But alas! the changing conditions of the country put its veto on that, and the C. P. R. passed twenty-two miles to the south of us, leaving Fort Ellice high and dry, as of yore, in its primitive greatness for a few years longer.

The settlers around Riding Mountain were raising good crops of wheat about this time, but a large amount of it was frozen every year. There was no market or any means of transportation so the Company decided to erect a flour mill and supply all the Posts with flour. The machinery was hauled in and the stone mill erected. It bought and ground up the wheat for a few seasons but only a very poor quality of flour could be produced from the very best of the frozen wheat and bannocks only could be made from it. Some of the wheat was frozen so badly that it would run through the stones in soft dough instead of flour, and clog everything up. However, the mill persevered for a few years, when one day the boiler blew up, and set the whole building on fire. Everything was burned to the ground, and no one was sorry; it was the best day's business the mill had ever done. That mill was one of the white elephants that cost the Company a lot of money. After that the seasons changed and frozen wheat was a thing of the past. Increased acreage under cultivation seemed to put the summer frosts out of commission all over the country, but the early settlers knew what flour made out of frozen wheat tasted and looked like, and had to depend on their mixed farming for a living. Butter and eggs were the currency in those days.

CHAPTER VI.

Many of the officers who were financially able sent their children away to be educated. Some were sent to the old country by the Company's ships, while a great majority were educated at St. John's College, Winnipeg, which turned out many scholars of prominence in many of the professions. Some had governesses at the Forts, while those who were not able to send their children away had to give them such education themselves, locally, and in their own homes, missions, or tents, as best they could, and in as far as the limited education of many of the parents themselves would permit them to instil the educational knowledge they were possessed of into their offspring. Many of the children received a very fair education in that way, and there were very few who could not sign their own names and read and write sufficiently well to carry them through the times and conditions then prevailing in the country.

On the other hand many were only able to make a mark and have same witnessed, in the case of a hiring contract, shipping bills or any other document to which it was necessary to have a signature attached. The missionaries also gave as much attention to the education of the children of the country as circumstances would permit, owing to the ever moving and roving disposition of the people; made necessary by their hunting and trapping occupations, which also kept the sky pilots busy, not giving them much time at any one point to devote much of their attention to secular instruction. In later years Industrial Boarding Schools and day schools were established on the Reserves and the educational difficulties were to a great extent overcome. I will mention several well known names of men born and educated in the country, as well as some of the boys who were sent to the old country to acquire their education, who were, and some of them still are outstanding figures and leaders in their professions. Colin

Inkster, familiarly known as "The Sheriff," who has been continuously Sheriff of Winnipeg for over forty years, also having the distinction of being the Rector's warden in the Anglican Church, St. John's Cathedral, for a term of over 49 years, in his own parish.

Bishop Anderson, of the Diocese of Moosonee, was going to school in Orkney when I entered the service of the H. B. C. John Norquay, late premier of Manitoba, the Late Hon. James McKay, of Silver Heights, Rev. George Flett, Rev. James Flett, Rev. Charles Pratt, Rev. Gilbert Cook, Rev. Settee and many others, men of high character, noble aims and ambitions, eloquent, self-sacrificing, men of ability, endurance, patience, and charitable to a fault.

There were also lawyers, doctors, bankers, civil engineers, school teachers, etc., etc., who had all run Buffalo, baked a bannock, eaten pemmican, drank lots of black tea out of a tin cup, or the cover of a copper tea kettle, cooked and boiled on a little fire of Buffalo chips on the banks of a small creek, or near the edge of a little slough, while their horses grazed on the prairie near the water.

There were many others born and educated in the country, both men and women who attained great distinction and influence, both in and out of the Company's service, whose personalities and achievements would fill many pages of history. I will mention but one family which I cannot pass over, with whom I have been intimately acquainted ever since I came into the country, and whose many kindnesses and friendships are ever dear to me and can never be forgotten. I mean Chief Factor McDonald's family. Mrs. McDonald, before her marriage was Miss Ellen Inkster, and a sister of Colin Inkster, "The Sheriff," a very estimable and highly educated lady, a hospitable, kind, and affectionate mother, wrapped up in the early training of her children, guiding, and forming their characters with unfailing patience, perseverance and kindness.

so much desired but often lacking in some degree in the best of well regulated families.

Misses Mary and Nora, John Archie, and Donald H., were the four children when I first arrived at Fort Ellice. Edward Ellice was born in October, 1876, and Harold, the youngest was born in November of 1885, the year of the Riel rebellion. As well as having tutors at home, they were all educated at St. John's College, McGill and Harvard Universities. Miss Mary graduated as a nurse at the General Hospital, Winnipeg. Miss Nora became an artist, and has many fine paintings to her credit. John Archie entered the service for a few years, and was in charge of Nipigon and Chapleau Posts; retiring, he gave his attention to cattle buying and ranching. He was member for North Qu'Appelle in the Saskatchewan Legislature, and is today engaged among his multitudinous enterprises, in the growing of flax on the large estate of Lady Strathcona's at Silver Heights. He married Miss Nora Campbell, the only daughter of Chief Factor Campbell. They have a nice family and own a beautiful home in the city of Winnipeg.

Donald—or D. H., as we all call him—was also in the service for a short time at Touchwood Hills. He retired and established a private bank at Fort Qu'Appelle in 1887, and is still doing business there. He was also a member of the Territorial Legislature at Regina for North Qu'Appelle for a number of years. He married a Miss Benson of Regina, and they have a lovely little daughter, "Frances," who is her mother's joy and her father's idol. He, as well as John Archie, has made a great success in the commercial and business world.

Edward Ellice was born on a bitterly cold morning at Fort Ellice, in October 1876. I remember the event quite well, as I was mudding the building at the time, slashing it into the cracks with my bare hands, to keep the wind and snow from blowing and drifting into the room. He grew up with tender care, was educated at St. John's and graduated at McGill and

Harvard Universities as a doctor, went to New York, where he took further honors, and became an expert and specialist in many lines of his profession, lecturing before the aged professors, who in many instances awarded him the palm of victory. He has written several works on surgery and medicine, which are recognized as the highest authority for reference. He stands at the head of his profession in New York and other American cities as a specialist. He also owns gold mines, and has large mining interests in Manitoba.

Harold was born in 1885 amongst the din of war and rebellion. He was educated at home (Fort Qu'Appelle), and Upper Canada College, and graduated at McGill University as a civil Engineer and Surveyor and B. Sc., practised his profession until the war broke out in 1914, when he went overseas, returning to Canada after the Armistice was signed in 1918, as Brigadier General, but minus his left arm, and with many scars of battle on his body. He was mentioned many times in despatches, and was the first Saskatchewan boy to receive the D. S. O. and C. M. G. I am glad to be able, in my own way, to pay my little tribute to this distinguished family with whom I have been associated so long, and whose friendship has been genuine and enduring through the long list of years that has sped away since we all first met. The bonds of friendship in the early days were strong and sincere, and were not made to be easily broken.

CHAPTER VII.

Under the MacKenzie Government the seat of Government for the North-West Territories was at Battleford, and Hon. David Laird was Lieut.-Governor, and was appointed later on as Indian Commissioner under the Laurier Administration.

Several appointments of Indian agents, farm instructors, and other Government officials, had been going on for a few years, and a number of ex-officers and servants of the Company, who held the friendship and good will of the Indians were being appointed.

The decrease of the buffalo was becoming a serious matter, and the Indians were becoming gradually induced to come off the plains and settle on the different Reserves that had already been selected and surveyed and some of them were already engaged in a very small and primitive way to till the soil and plant a few potatoes and other small seeds. But it was an uphill job for many years, it being entirely foreign to their former life on the plains, but in this way the government of the Indians by the Company, to that of the Dominion Government, was to the Indians at least almost imperceptibly made and effected without any friction, by the policy of the Government in making the above appointments, and the co-operation and assistance of the Hudson's Bay Company's officials. It was a very nice piece of diplomacy, carried out in the best interests of the Dominion, and all parties concerned.

The Company appointed many of the Indian chiefs, each one receiving this distinction was decorated with a large silver medal which proclaimed the fact. They were known as the Company's chiefs. These chiefs negotiated and signed the treaty on behalf of their respective bands, which was also witnessed by the H. B. Company's officials at the Fort where the Treaty was made, and signed by the Government official for the crown.

All hunting, trapping and fishing rights, as heretofore, on land and water belonging to the Government of Canada, outside the Reserves, was guaranteed to them as long as the sun shone, water ran, and grass grew.

As soon as the Treaty was signed, sealed and delivered, in the presence of witnesses, the Indians became automatically and officially the wards of the Canadian Government, which relieved the Company of this great responsibility, which they had always considered a sacred duty, and had done their part towards the Indians with charitable justice, and parental watchfulness for nearly two centuries.

At the time of the transfer of the country to the Canadian Government, the Company also retained their trading and other rights, which they had heretofore enjoyed, having been granted to them under their charter from King Charles in 1670, which still holds valid and constitutional.

Although treaties were being successfully made and concluded, with the various tribes all over the territory, yet, among the Indians of the plains there was great danger of starvation. Reports were becoming more frequent that only small straggling herds of buffalo were met with, and far apart, not sufficient for one-quarter of the Indians and hunters who were in search of food.

One day late in the fall of 1879, a young Indian, White Bear, rode into the Fort. He looked more like a skeleton than an Indian. He was weak and starving and when he got off his pony he fell down in a faint, being completely exhausted from want of food.

When we had given him something warm to drink, and a very small portion of food, he was somewhat revived, and told his story. For the sake of others he had faced death to try to reach the Fort. About fifty miles south, on the plains, he had left in the face of a snow storm, fifteen families starving, who were unable to come any farther. Some of the children and very old men and women of the party had already died of

starvation, having in their extremity eaten up all their dogs and horses, the horse the Indian was riding being the only one left. His errand was to send out food, and bring those who still survived into the Fort.

No time was lost in sending out men, horses, rigs and sufficient grub to bring the whole party in. The Indian was able to go back in one of the rigs, and acted as guide. The rescuers made a bee line and reached the camp before they pulled up or unhitched, having taken the precaution also, of taking enough firewood along with them in the rigs, as the party of Indians were out on the bald headed prairie. They found conditions worse than the Indian had reported, two more of them had died during his absence, and the others were in no condition to move until they had received nourishment, which had to be given them in very small portions, at short intervals. They were ravenous when they saw the food, but in order to save their lives it had to be given them very sparingly. They were eventually, in the course of three or four days, all gathered in to the vicinity of the Fort. Their tents were pitched, and with careful nursing and feeding we had them all able to walk about for a short distance in a week or ten days. There was nothing to do but keep them at the Fort all winter, so we had them pitch off down in the valley, on a flat where there was a good sized bluff of dry wood, which also provided good shelter for their tents. This we did in the hope that they would be able to hunt rabbits and partridges, and provide part of their own food, during the winter, which was then showing many signs of being a severe one, and indeed such it proved to be before spring. Lieut.-Col. McDonald, who was then Indian agent for treaty No. 4, and his interpreter, Peter Hourie, who was an ex-H. B. C. man, were about 70 miles west, up the Qu'Appelle Valley, at Crooked Lakes, where they were trying to locate some of the sick and destitute widows and orphans on the Reserve, where a few of the Cree Plain Indians, had already been settled the previous

year. Of course they had all to receive a daily ration of such food as could be procured, which at that time was not over-abundant, but there were plenty of whitefish and other kinds in the lake, which was surely a Godsend for all those who camped near the lake that winter. A letter was despatched to Col. McDonald, advising him of the condition of the Indians at Fort Ellice. He sent Peter Hourie down immediately to look after them and do the best he could with them for the winter. He purchased supplies from the Company on account of the Indian Department—which he had the authority to do —and by the new year had them in fairly good shape. He got them to cut cordwood and dry firewood, which the Company bought and took in exchange for necessary clothing for the old women and children. But with all Peter Hourie's attention they did not seem to thrive. They knew nothing about any kind of work, and were extremely lazy and dirty. We had christened the camp Poverty Flat, and the spot retained its name and traditions for many years afterwards. Towards spring they all contracted some fatal disease, it looked like small-pox, scarlet fever, and a very high fever all at once and the same time. It carried them off in three or four days. The lad who first brought in the news was the only one who survived out of the whole lot, and Peter Hourie sent him up to Crooked Lakes, where the other Indians were. The ground was too solidly frozen to bury the dead Indians decently, and a great many of the bodies were simply buried in the snow. The water was very high that Spring, the river overflowing its banks, and the whole valley flooded. The ice swept all these dead bodies before it down the river, and we never heard anything more of them. When the water receded again Poverty Flat was clean, swept and garnished, and we escaped contracting the disease they all died of, whatever it may have been.

Two of the old original Swan River to York Factory York boat brigade guides, Peter Brass and William Daniels, or

Kitchie William, as he was always called, whose favourite tipple was Perry Davis Painkiller, both of them magnificent specimens of manhood, powerful and athletic, came down with the scows from Fort Pelly that Spring, and reported having come straight across some of the points, not having to navigate the river at all in many places. They said that beaver and bear were plentiful all along the valley. Daniels died a good many years ago at File Hills; Brass is still living with some of his relatives at Lestock, in the Touchwood Hills, and is now in his 103rd year. His aged wife died a few years ago; she was over ninety.

It was only the Crees and Blackfeet who lived continuously on the great plains for generations and whose only occupation was hunting buffalo, who suffered most as the buffalo became scarcer. The Northern Indians who lived more in the bush country did not feel the passing of the buffalo to any serious extent, as they were experts at fishing and trapping smaller and more valuable furs, which were plentiful, as well as moose and deer. Many of the bush Indians were driven from the plains years and years before when the Crees and Blackfeet were on the warpath. The Cypress Hills was neutral ground for many years, neither of the many war parties caring to investigate or make explorations through this large tract of country. Those who did were seldom heard of again, and their scalps were generally found with the enemy on the opposite side of the hills. The enemy were always prowling round both sides of the hills, where they could get cover, and make an occasional dash for plunder and murder, so that hunting in the Cypress Hills for many years was not only considered foolhardy, but those who indulged in it were actually courting the loss of their scalp locks. In consequence there were all kinds of unmolested game and fur bearing animals in the area which in later years yielded enormous quantities of fur until it was also cleaned out.

Although it had been a very severe winter on many of the plain Indians, the bush Indians had all made very good hunts throughout the bluffs and wooded country, very little sickness or lack of provisions being reported from any of the Posts. It was considered that a good profitable trade had been made all over the District. We had a very good winter at Fort Ellice. I had a partner in the workshop with me all winter, Willie Sinclair, a Scotchman who was a boatbuilder at York, and a good all round carpenter. Besides other new and repair work we turned out a number of horse and dog flat sleds for the Indian trade as well as for use in the District; also a couple of sets of bob sleighs for the wood-haulers, which John the blacksmith shod and ironed up to the Queen's taste. Trippers were back and forward to the different hunting grounds visiting Indians, taking out trading supplies and bringing back furs, as well as moose and deer meat. Everything went along with the usual harmony of a well regulated Fort. Drever and Calder generally joined us in the evenings, when we would have a rubber at cribbage, whist, sometimes it would be catch-the-ten, or a few games of checkers with which we enlivened the evening. At other times we would have regular concerts. Drever was a beautiful singer of Scotch songs and Calder also sang well. Sometimes, especially on Sunday night, we would all sing hymns. Calder knew all the hymns that Moody and Sankey ever sang, as well as the other sacred songs, so before the winter was over we all could handle our parts like any choir. There was generally a dance once a week, and oftener if some one could work up any plausible excuse, so we were not at all handicapped for amusements of all kinds. In the summer we practised as often as possible all the Caledonian games, horse racing, rowing and the manly art, and on the 24th of May we held our annual sports, to which all the Indians assembled, many of them taking part, and in some cases carrying away the first prizes. These athletic games were conducted on the square; the best performer won and was awarded his prize to the entire satisfaction of himself and everybody else.

CHAPTER VIII.

All the immediate requirements in carpenter work about the Fort were in pretty good shape, and I was transferred to Riding Mountain House to assist Mr. Armit, as he was short handed that fall, a saw-mill having been added to the flour mill. He had taken out a big drive of logs, which were all in booms and pockets on the Little Saskatchewan, near the mill. The superintending of a large gang of men keeping him busy with the outside work, and giving him but little time to give attention to the store or Indian trade. By this time I had learned quite a bit of the Indian language. I knew the name of everything in the store and could trade fairly well, so Mr. Armit put me in charge of the store. Of course, when a bunch of Indians would come round he would always come and do the intricate parts of the trading himself, and help me out as he could speak the language quite fluently.

There were two young fellows acting as assistants in the store. We had also quite a number of white customers, there being at this time a large settlement of farmers, so we were all kept pretty busy. The men working in the flour and saw mill always required something or other after six o'clock. I soon got into the swing of the trade and progressed nicely.

Besides the mills, we had a large boarding house and bunk house for the men, also carpenter and blacksmith shops in connection with the mill. The store was a new, large, frame building, built the previous year by the millwrights and sawyers, and we carried a large stock, nearly everything from a needle to an anchor, and a very good and profitable trade was being done at that time in lumber to the settlers, and trading butter and eggs to beat the band when there were no Indians round with furs, moose skins, or rabbit skin robes, to trade. There were few of the Company's regularly engaged servants. They were all paid by the day, week, or month,

mostly lumberjacks, bushmen, river drivers, a few mechanics, all from Eastern Canada, who had been accustomed to this class of work, and had come west to settle. The most of them took up homesteads and made good settlers, while others, after they had made a little money, drifted away to some other part of the country looking for something better. These latter kept on circulating, finally disappearing altogether, to be replaced by new stragglers who were "broke" and looking for a job.

We had a large herd of black Berkshire pigs, in an enclosure near the river, which we were fattening up on the offal from the mill, and any tough looking scout who came along could always get a job on the pig ranch. However, none of them seemed to stick it long, and as soon as they made enough to carry them on for a few days, they would curse all the pigs in creation and the ones they were looking after in particular, and jump the job. However, we made a lot of money out of the pig ranch although pork was only worth from 3c to 5c per pound, dressed, at that time, there being lots of cheap pig feed in the country. After spending about one year and a half at Riding Mountain House, I was called back to Fort Ellice again.

I liked the Riding Mountain Indians, they were good hunters, and brought in nice well-stretched, prime and clean fur. I did not like the other part of the trade, and I think Mr. Armit was sorry that he ever recommended building a mill and pig-ranch at Riding Mountain. Nevertheless, he stuck to it, and made the Post pay as long as he remained in charge of it, helping many of the early settlers and farmers round that part of the country.

I found most of the boys I left at Fort Ellice still there on my return, and I was glad to meet them all again. Everything was moving along, at, and around the Fort in much the same way, only my old friend John Ferguson was very ill in bed in the men's house. Since he had become a freeman he had worked very hard freighting with a few carts, and

had gone through several prairie fires on his trips. Anxious to get along, he had overtaxed his physical powers. The boys had taken him up to the Fort from his ranch at Snake Creek some weeks before, and were doing the best they knew how to nurse him back to health and strength again, but he did not seem to pick up, and the worst part of it was he was losing heart himself. The steamboat was up and we persuaded him to go down to the hospital at Winnipeg. He was so weak that we had to carry him on a stretcher from the Fort to the boat. He arrived at the hospital in due season, but the Doctors could do nothing for him, and a few days later he passed peacefully away. Some of his own countrymen buried him in Winnipeg, and his family in Lewis were duly notified by the Company. Thus passed away one of my best friends and comrades. Everybody liked John; he was white from head to foot, "all wool and two yards wide." Though he was a freeman it made no difference to any of us. He always had his place in the men's house the same as when he was a regular servant and got his share of whatever was going, the same as the rest of us. There was no man better loved or better known in that part of the country than John Ferguson, and we all sincerely mourned his having been cut down in the prime and strength of his manhood. Everything had looked so promising for his future welfare but he was taken away in a moment, as it were, from the family circle of companions and comrades, who were, practically speaking, all strangers in a strange land. Honest tears of strong men could not be held back when the news reached us that John Ferguson was dead, and I am not ashamed to herein record it. The Boss and his whole family were just as fond of John as any of us, and had done everything they could during his illness to nourish and comfort him.

Mr. Calder was now full-fledged District Accountant and was daily absorbed in books, figures and accounts. He had laid away as curiosities the old grey goose quill pen, and had

adopted the Waverley and other makes of steel pens, to do duty. A new era had dawned. There was also a new innovation of wrapping paper and bags for the store. The old style was that when an Indian bought a pound of tea he had also to buy a 25c handkerchief of Royal red to wrap it up in. Now he could have his parcels neatly tied up in paper without cost. So many white settlers were now customers at the store this new method of wrapping purchased goods had become an absolute necessity. Drever said the introduction of this custom had spoiled the sale of many a good handkerchief. The fiat, however, had gone forth, and paper bags and wrapping paper and counter twine were henceforth part of the equipment and stock in trade, and a supply was forwarded to every trading store in the District, where its use was considered necessary in the more modern conduct of the grocery part of the business.

Indian Reserves were now surveyed at Moose Mountain, Crooked Lakes, Fort Qu'Appelle, File Hills, and Touchwood Hills, and farther west for the Blackfeet, Sarcees, and Peigans. The plain Indians, being gradually moved in by the Government agents, settled, rationed, and generally looked after by the Indian Department at the various Reserves, assisted when necessary by the North West Mounted Police patrols.

The men and staff of the Posts and Districts were re-arranged with slight changes annually. Donald McKinnon was now transferred to Riding Mountain. Murdoch McDonald and his bagpipes (which we all missed) was transferred for duty back again to Fort Pelly, and I was transferred to Fort Qu'Appelle where a new saleshop, office, and clerks' quarters had to be erected. It seemed to be a meeting and parting with some of us all the time, but it was always giving us a wider experience and knowledge with which to discharge our duties in later years.

John Morrison had made up his mind to go home at the expiration of his five-year contract, which would be in the

following spring. So I bade him good-bye for good, he being the last one I shook hands with when starting out for Fort Qu'Appelle, and we passed through the Crooked Lakes reserve on our way to that place. This Reserve fronted on the Qu'Appelle River, Crooked and Round Lakes, for a distance of 36 miles, and 12 miles back, being all in one block of 12 surveyed townships; a most beautiful part of the country, right on the Northern edge of the great plains, fine poplar bluffs, some small lakes and the choicest of wheat land, an ideal location chosen by the Indians themselves. This had aways been a great wintering place for the Indians, there being plenty of fish in the lakes. We camped here with John Setter, who was the son of an old Hudson Bay man, and was born in Red River Settlement. He had been sent up here by the Indian Department to establish a home farm on this Reserve and generally look after the Indians as they were being brought in from the plains. His home farm building and provision store and ration house was about four miles back from the river, built on the banks of a nice small, clear lake. Camped all about him were destitute widows, orphans, old men and women and children to whom he was giving daily rations.

This was what he called the home farm, although as yet there did not appear to be any signs of farming operations of any kind in the near vicinity, but he had a few grub hoes, and spades, as well as a few sacks of seed potatoes and other small seeds that he was going to start operations with in the spring. They would all work together the first year, in the same garden, results of production would be equally divided among them. He said there were quite a number of Indians already settled in the valley, along the river and lakes which he visited every few days, having a horse and buckboard for that purpose, and always carried a little tea and tobacco for distribution to the old people who might be short.

Mr. Setter thought it would take a few years before these people would become self-supporting, as they had ab-

solutely no knowledge of farming, or stock raising, and were not anxious to learn. But he was going to try his best to encourage and help them to try to make a living for themselves out of the soil, which seemed to the Indians at that time to be the utmost folly. About thirty-two miles east of the Fort we entered the Qu'Appelle Valley and crossed the river at a point known as the Racette Crossing. The valley from here to the Fort was dotted with houses its entire length, this being an old wintering settlement of Scotch and French half-breeds, whose fathers, grandfathers, or great grandfathers had all been men of the Hudson's Bay Company and had such familiar names as Joe Racette, Donald Ross, Jamie Grant, Alex Fisher, Dauphanais, La'Roque, McKay, Simpson, Sansregret, Antoine Hamelin, Alexis Labombard, and many others. They were all plain hunters and freighters, in the spring put in small crops of wheat, barley, corn, potatoes, turnips, onions, and other vegetables, then went out on the plains in the summer and made their pemmican and dry meat. They returned in the fall, gathered up their harvest, which generally showed good returns, fixed up their houses and had a good time during the winter. They were fairly well to do as far as this world's goods went in the shape of horses, carts, and large families. which was the standard gauge of wealth in those days.

There was a nice Roman Catholic mission about four miles below the Fort which looked after the spiritual welfare of these people. Father De'Corby visited them frequently and had been in charge of the mission some years. At this time Father Huggonard was one of the young priests in residence, whose name in later years became a household word, not only among Roman Catholics, but also among the Protestants.

The Fort was now in sight, beautifully situated on the south bank of the river on a large flat between the two large lakes. It was one of the most picturesque and beautiful locations in all the North West.

CHAPTER IX.

This is the home of the Echo, hence its name Qu'Appelle or "who calls?"

There were quite a number of halfbreeds and other customers round the Fort, and a number of tents pitched on the flat, their owners waiting for the arrival of our brigade of carts as we were loaded with considerable merchandise that had been sold out at the Fort. On our arrival I handed my letter to W. J. McLean, chief trader, who was the gentleman in charge and whom I had previously met at Fort Ellice. Henry McKay was in the store, and some other clerks whom I had not previously met. We had made the trip in nine days (120 miles) without any mishap, and our loads checked out O. K. as per our bills of lading.

Henry conducted me to the men's house, and as it was now evening he sat and chatted with us a while, as he was anxious to get the Fort Ellice news. John Ross, who had arrived from Touchwood Hills a few days before, was busy getting supper at the same old open fireplace, assisted by the yellow light of a tallow dip, stuck in its own grease on the end of a billet of dry wood. He was watching the frying of a fine buffalo steak that some of the hunters had brought in to the Fort that day, and it was the last buffalo fresh meat I ever had the pleasure of eating after that, although we had lots of pemmican, dry meat and marrow fat bladders for several years following.

Ducks and geese were plentiful on the river and lakes, and especially at Simpson's point on the upper lake. Flight shooting was excellent in the mornings and evenings both in the spring and fall.

One fall Mr. McLean killed twelve large Mallard ducks and drakes on the river just in front of the Fort with one shot, at a distance of about thirty-five yards. This was the record shot for Qu'Appelle, and he often told the story and

pointed out the spot on the river, and the exact place he stood when he "opened up" on the ducks, killing every one in the flock. His statement was duly vouched for by the cook, David Chambers, who plucked, stuffed, and roasted them. Pot shooting was not considered good sportsmanship, but I have often seen from four to six ducks brought down with both barrels in flight shooting, which will give you an idea of how numerous the birds were during the evening flights. There were few white servants at the Fort. Mostly half-breeds and Indians were employed. Charlie Favel, Sam Geddes, old Geordie Thorne, Antoine Sayr, Peter LaPierre, John Ross, Henry McKay, the Boss, David Chambers, and myself, comprised all the regular engaged servants for that winter. There were also a few Indians for temporary odd jobs. I spent the winter making doors and windows and other inside finishings necessary for the new store, office and clerks' quarters, which I had come to build, utilizing any of the men that I required to give me assistance.

The Mounted Police had their barracks on the other side of the valley opposite the Fort. They were very friendly and visited the Fort regularly spending many a social evening with us. It was here I first met Sam Steele, Sam Donaldson, M. P., Major Walsh, Major Walker, Captain Griesbach, Tom Baker, Jack Leader, Capt. Jack French, and many others of the Mounted Police officers and constables, all men of sterling worth, who had pioneered and protected the country since 1874. Many individual acts of bravery and courage were then to the credit of the force at many of the outlying posts and on their patrol routes. Too much praise cannot be handed down in history to all the members of the N. W. M. P. force in the early days of scattered settlements throughout the territory. They were the riders of the plains who never missed the bringing to justice of the man or woman they went after, very often single handed.

It was a great winter in the settlement; everybody had lots of grub and dancing, which was the chief enjoyment, was on nearly every night, at some house or other. The people had nothing else to do but make merry during the week, go to mass on Sunday, and observe the numerous church holidays. I knew several of the men, having met them before on their freighting trips to Fort Ellice, so I soon got acquainted all round the settlement and along with the others took in many of the dances. There was quite a lot of excitement during the winter. A report had come through that the railway was heading straight for the Fort, and that Fort Qu'Appelle was to be made the capital. Real estate men began to arrive from Winnipeg and Portage La Prairie by dog trains. They were all very mysterious. Everyone had something "up his sleeve" so they would lead you to believe. General Rosser, chief engineer of the C. P. R., also came through with two or three dog trains, and that settled it, the railway was coming here sure. Travelling in the engineer's wake came all kinds of land sharks, some with dog trains and some with horses and flat sleds, and all kinds of conflicting stories got abroad. These foxy newcomers lost no time in taking options on the half-breed squatters' rights. Some squatted on homesteads, and hiring men to build shacks and do other improvements, it made no difference to them whether it was surveyed or not, as they intended to sell to the next outfit that came through. Every man could see a town site on his special location. Get rich quick and get rich often was the password and watch-word. It created a lot of business round the Fort. They all had to get supplies, guides, dogs, horses, or something, and the bulk of them had letters of credit from Winnipeg, and these went to it like so many madmen, as long as their letter of credit lasted. It's true there had been a trial line run in to the Fort by some of the C. P. R. location survey parties, but there was nothing authentic about it at all; and the Railway construction was then only a little west of Brandon. But it was

a booming winter at Fort Qu'Appelle, and the whole thing purely speculative. The snow was pretty deep, and many of those who had come into our country had a pretty tough time before they got back to their homes again.

It was a wonderful winter, and many of the natives and half-breeds who had never seen or heard of a railway expected to see this wonderful iron horse come snorting up the valley into the Fort at any time, crushing everything that impeded his progress in his headlong speed.

I started building the new store very early in the Spring and before midsummer we had it completed and the new stock moved in, with ample accommodation both in room and supplies for the large increase in customers that had taken place during the year. A very large business was being done. It kept four clerks busy in the store all the time. Very few of the old plain hunters went out after buffalo that spring although a few stray herds were still reported farther west. Neither did the Company send out any trading supplies to the plains, as was the usual custom. A much larger quantity of freight than usual had to come from Ellice to meet the increased business, so many of the old hunters turned their attention to freighting. They owned plenty of carts and horses and could make several trips during the summer. They all made good money at it, and brought up stacks of freight, some loaded for Touchwood Hills, others for Carlton, Prince Albert, Edmonton and other points farther north and west. They made a general clean-up from Fort Ellice that year of all accumulated freight and supplies. Every frontier post and district had increased their requisitions in anticipation of the increased business requirements, and then some of them were short before the next outfit came through. I started building the office, with clerks' quarters upstairs, immediately after the new store was occupied, and had it finished throughout, ready for occupation before Christmas, so I had a fairly busy summer, and there was no more new buildings to go up that year. Half of the freight

was generally advanced at Fort Ellice, the other half at Post of destination, all in goods of course out of the store, this alone kept the clerks pretty busy. The squatters and townsite speculators had also had a busy year, but I don't think many of them had a very profitable one. Plenty of little shacks, built of poles, dotted the plain for miles around the Fort to show where men had taken up land and marked their claims. Some of them only built two or three rounds of poles, just enough to mark the spot where their fortune was to be made, then left for the south in the fall, after having spent all their savings. A great many of them never came back again, they had got cooled off and no doubt were trying some easier marks in new and more lucrative pastures, where the call of the North did not give them so intense a passion to live close with nature, as it had done a couple of years before.

Not having at the moment any pressing carpenter work to do, Mr. McLean asked me to work in the store, as they were shorthanded for the Christmas trade. This was then my winter job, except when something turned up that required my attention in the workshop, but the greater part of my time was spent in the store, until the following Spring. The year which followed was a busy one at Fort Ellice and Qu'Appelle, for both the officers and men. Chief Commisioner Graham made a hurried trip to Qu'Appelle early in the Spring, no doubt to size up the situation for himself, as Mr. Armit, the secretary from London, was expected out before the 31st of May. Later Mr. Armit and D. A. Smith arrived at Fort Qu'Appelle, where they met Chief Factor McDonald, and were in consultation with Mr. McLean for a day or so. I was detailed by Mr. McLean to drive them all out to the end of the construction line, which was then somewhere in the vicinity of Indian Head, where they had arranged to meet a construction train at a certain time. We saw the train arrive about fifteen minutes ahead of us. Donald A. Smith said to me, "Well done, McKenzie. We have made the connection as near time as Sir

George Simpson could do with his canoes and Indian crews." Mr. Armit handed me a five dollar gold piece. I saw them safely aboard the caboose of the ballast train which had been provided for them, and turned my team towards Fort Qu'Appelle, quite satisfied with my luck.

I learned on the following day that the upshot of all these hurried conferences had been that Fort Qu'Appelle had been made the headquarters of the District; that Chief Factor McDonald and his whole staff of clerks were coming up to assume charge, and that Mr. McLean was to be transferred to the charge of Fort Ellice, all of which took place in due course without any friction or loss of time.

Drever and Calder came up with the Boss, and we were all together again. My contract had expired, and my first concern was to see the Boss as soon as I could after his arrival. He congratulated me on the work I had done in the District, being perfectly satisfied with me, and said he would grant me a new contract for three years, raise my salary to sixty pounds, and promote me to the position of postmaster in the service.

This position had nothing to do with the post office, but simply established my status as being competent and capable to take charge of a post anywhere in the service; it also gave me the right to all the privileges of the officers' mess. I signed the contract which was dated back to the first of June, 1881. I was now a junior officer and had my first meal at the officers' mess in the Big House with Drever and Calder as my right and left hand supporters. The grub was the same quality that I was used to in the men's house, only it was cooked and served by David Chambers, whose pet name was Cap.

Fort Qu'Appelle became quite a village in a very short time. It had several stores, blacksmith shop, flour mill and doctors, a school, lawyers, splendid hotel, restaurants, and everything else that goes to make up a well-appointed village.

It also possessed a town hall and many fine residences, but it did not become the capital, and the railway passed about twenty miles south of it.

General Rosser and Secretan had said they did not see the utility of crossing rivers and running down into deep valleys for the fun of pulling out of them again; so they skirted all rivers and valleys as much as they could, and kept to the open prairies where construction was less expensive and progress more rapid. This was the final and great reason that the C. P. R. did not go to Fort Qu'Appelle, and also the reason that Fort Qu'Appelle is not the capital of Saskatchewan today.

Hon. Edgar Dewdney, who was Lieut.-Governor and Indian Commissioner at this time was looking up a site for a capital and was strongly in favour of Fort Qu'Appelle. He camped on the south bank of the valley behind the Fort for several weeks with his staff. Everyone thought the selection of a capital had been made when one day he moved camp and pitched his tents on the banks of the Pile of Bones Creek, where Regina is situated today. A more bleak or miserable location as his new camping ground was at that time could hardly be imagined as a site for the Capital. It was supposed he had his instructions from the capital, Ottawa. There it is, anyway.

Business continued good as usual, increasing in volume as new settlers arrived. Drever knew all the Indians and half-breeds, so it was like home-coming to him to be back at Qu'-Appelle again. My duties lay now in and around the stores and trading shop. Calder, when not too busy in his office, would sometimes come in and give us a hand. The Boss himself supervised everything generally, inside and outside of the Fort. He had many deputations of Indians and half-breeds to see him daily, discussing trade and other changing conditions, which were rapidly taking place all over the country, conditions which the then old timers could not help but view with some suspicion and alarm.

So we all went merrily along, trading, freighting, driving, riding and fishing, everyone carrying on after his own bent and purpose. Business was good and everything looked rosy.

Old Geordie Thorne was born in the service and had been around Qu'Appelle all his life. He was always at the beck and call of everybody. He was a most trustworthy, faithful and reliable servant, looking after the cows, hens and horses, and doing general odd jobs. He considered everything around the Fort his own private property, called them "my cows," "my horses," "my rigs," etc. He had never learned to count farther than ten; anything beyond that he described "Plenty, many perhaps, two tree million by gosh." He was afraid of the Priest, and never missed going to church every Sunday morning. Anyone he did not know, he would describe as "that d—d stupid English fellow." He was very much troubled with toothache at this time as his ivories had been reduced to roots and a few stumps. We induced him, one day, to allow the doctor to extract them, and make him a new set. The new set did not fit him very well, but he had no more toothache. He used to hang his artificial teeth up in the stable, when he was working around the cows and horses. One day he forgot them, and one of the cows got hold of them, chewed them, and rendered them useless. In order to punish the cow for her misdemeanour old Geordie did not milk her for two days, and lectured her most severely in French, English and Indian.

While he was making her do penance the cook slyly milked the cow without the old man's knowlege. Geordie had a daughter at Riding Mountain whom he had not seen for years. One day he took a notion that he would like to visit her, so the Boss arranged the trip for the old man. He arrived at his daughter's place, and was about to return again to Qu'Appelle when he took suddenly ill with acute indigestion. He lived only a few hours, and was buried at Riding Mountain. He was a most inoffensive, good-natured and good living old

man, a little weak in the intellect, but one of those noble characters of genuine simplicity and honesty, who lived and died for the Company and Church, totally ignorant of what we call education. His life often appealed to me, as he was without a worry or care in the world, and always happy. He knew nothing except what he saw, but had an excellent memory. We all missed old Geordie very much.

By now the Indians were getting pretty well settled on the Reserves west of the Fort at the end of the upper lake, Pasqua, Miscow-e-petung, and Piapot were the three chiefs. The latter with his band was giving the Government officials quite a lot of trouble, as they did not wish to settle on any Reserve, preferring to wander all over the plains as was their customary mode of living. They were eventually made to understand that if they did not remain on the Reserve they would not be helped as the other Indians were being helped by the Government. The other reserves east of the Fort at File Hills had chiefs Little Black Bear and Starblanket. They all soon became accustomed to living and doing a little work on the Reserves, under the guidance and supervision of the various farm instructors, and Indian agents, who were being appointed and placed among them to teach them the science of agriculture, stock-raising, house-building, and sanitary conditions generally so as to enable them to be or become partially self-supporting at some future period. There were plenty of Indians around the store every day and horse racing was the favourite pastime, many times from fifteen to twenty horses running in a bunch and all out for blood. Many horses changed hands in the betting on the winner.

The Treaty was paid about the middle of July, which stimulated trade to its highest notch for a week or ten days. The Indians were all good spenders, and held nothing back for a rainy day. It also gave a fresh impetus to horse-racing and gambling generally.

Late in the fall, some Indians came up from Crooked Lakes to trade some furs which they had secured. Nepapinace, an ex-servant of the Company, was one of them. He was a splendid looking man, over 6 feet, 3 inches, muscular and straight as an arrow with a rather good face, which appeared to wear a fixed smile, and a decided Roman nose. These Indians all knew Mr. McDonald and Drever very well. They turned in their furs, which I entered up in the day book. However, they did not seem to be in any hurry to start trading. After they had smoked some of the tobacco which the Boss had presented to them, he took them all over to his office, and asked Drever to go along to interpret.

The Indians of that day were peculiar characters. If they wished to talk about the simplest thing, the first thing they did was to light their pipes and start smoking and continue smoking in silence for some time. Then the one who had been chosen to speak would stand up and begin his oration, about long ago and far away and gradually come to what he intended to say. So you had to sit and listen in patience to many a long-winded yarn that would invariably end up with a request by the speaker to be advanced five dollars worth of goods on account of his hunt or Treaty money. This was what was called "taking debt." They were great thinkers and good judges of human character, their bumps of observation and caution being in most instances highly developed, therefore they were careful not to spring any request until they were almost sure it would be granted.

In this particular instance it was not debt they wanted but a whole store of goods which they were aspiring to land at Crooked Lakes. The upshot of the whole session was, that they were sent up by other Indians to inform the Boss that either Qu'Appelle or Fort Ellice was too far away, and they wanted him to give them a store at Crooked Lakes, and a man to look after it for the Company, and trade with them, they

on their part promising that they would not trade with anyone else but the Company if he would do this.

The proposition looked feasible enough to Mr. MacDonald, as by this time quite a number of the best hunters were located on the Crooked Lakes Reserves, and there were several free traders moving about the country in the vicinity of many of the Reserves. So Mr. MacDonald arranged with them at a certain time when most of the Indians would be back from their fall hunt, he would send a man down with sufficient goods to supply them, and that Nepapinace would give up part of his house for the accommodation of the goods and man, and would also asist the man in every way to look after the store and help him with the trading. He would in any case keep the store at his house until the Spring, which meant about the end of May, which was then the end of the financial year.

Nepapinace of course would be paid rent for his house, and any other work he did or might be required of him, and that as soon as they returned to their Reserve they would inform the Indians of this arrangement and would all hold their furs until the date set for the man and goods to arrive at Nepapinace's house. If no one arrived from the Fort at that time then they could either come up to the Fort to trade, or otherwise dispose of their furs and the deal would be off. The arrangement was quite satisfactory to Nepapinace or "Night Bird" and his companions, and they agreed that as they had spoken so would they act, and sealed the bargain with a handshake all round. It was all done verbally, and was as valid and binding between the Company and Indians at all times as any written bond could be. The Indians finished their trading next day, and started back for Crooked Lakes in good spirits, having had greater success than they expected and would not in future have so far to go to the store to trade a few skins.

Another horse race was on for that day, but they would not stop over to take it in, their mission was at the moment

of much greater importance than any horse race. So they galloped off to carry the good news of their new store to the other Indians and their families at Crooked Lakes.

Hughie McBeath had been transferred to the charge of Egg Lake Post for the winter and several other transfers throughout the District had been made some time ago, everyone supposed to be at their allotted Post where they were going to, and long ago settled down for the winter trade. Crooked Lakes was altogether an unforeseen proposition.

The fishing at the Fort was exceptionally good that fall. We had stacks of whitefish and the stages at the different fishing stations were all pretty well loaded. The smallest mesh used was 4½ inches, so the fish caught were pretty nice lots. Many of the half-breeds smoked part of their catch for their own use, and we very often had for breakfast smoked baked whole whitefish, baked potatoes in their jackets, fresh made butter, tea and toast. I just mention this to show that our menu was all the best of country produce, except the tea.

It was drawing near to Christmas week again. A number of hunters were turning up; business was good and everyone busy. A couple of new clerks had arrived and old Peter LaPierre had also turned in to lend a hand and do any extra interpreting that might be wanted in the office. So we had a full staff going strong. A day or two before Christmas the Boss told me the arrangement he had made with Nepapinace and that he was going to send me down to Crooked Lakes in charge of the goods which were all packed in small bales and ready for shipment. I was to take two men and five horses and flat sleds and leave the day after Xmas, as I had to arrive at Nepapinace's house on New Year's Day, in the morning. I was to stay there until Spring. He also gave me detailed instructions regarding the business, but I was supposed to use my own judgment in accordance with conditions and circumstances which might arise that he had not instructed me in. I was sorry to miss the Xmas week at the Fort, as

there were elaborate preparations for a good time that year, but I was also willing to go and anxious to demonstrate my ability to make good in the position I was promoted to as Postmaster.

Drever and Calder gave me good encouragement. They said they knew the Boss had confidence in me, and that I would come back with flying colours in the spring, this was the chance of my life, etc., etc.

David Thorne, an Indian and myself started with five loaded sleighs and ponies about noon the day after Xmas. We followed the valley all the way down. After we got past the settlement we had no trail, and the snow was fairly deep, so we did not make very good time. The horses were not very fat, and had to paw among the snow for their feed, so we did not make many miles a day, as we had pretty heavy loads on three of the sleds. I did not want to play the horses out as they had to go right back to Qu'Appelle. There were lots of tracks of deer and foxes, all the way down the valley after we left the settlement and I was praying that the Indians would have lots of fur to trade when we arrived. The weather was nice and mild, and we were progressing fine. The snow was loose and no crust. The distance from the Fort to Nepapinace's was about seventy miles. David Thorne had never been down the valley beyond the settlement before, but the Indian had, and knew all the twists and turns of it. It was not all plain sailing, we had some pretty tough places for the ponies to get over with their loads, through scrub and over cut bank creeks. We could not follow the river for any distance at a time, as it was very crooked. We travelled on the river once for about two hours, and when we stopped we were not thirty yards from where we had made our camp-fire at dinner time. We eventually arrived at the west end of Crooked Lake at noon, on the 31st day of December. The Indian said we would have to go about halfway down the lake to camp that night, and then by starting early the following

morning we would reach Nepapinace's before noon. After David interpreted all this to me, I felt good, and determined to arrive good and early, and make the arrangement good that Mr. MacDonald had made with them.

We came across lots of wolf, fox and deer tracks on the lake, and a great many rabbit tracks in the bush along the North Shore where we were travelling. We killed several that afternoon and had a fine hot supper. We were able to make a couple of miles farther down the lake before we camped than we expected, and ran across some snowshoe tracks. We also saw where a couple of dog trains had passed that day, all heading in the direction we were going, coming on to the lake from the North side of the valley. So we decided to camp for the night and make an early start in the morning.

The stars were still shining when we pulled out of camp, the lead pony followed the dog sled track, the Indian said the track was going straight towards Nepapinace's. In about an hour or so the ponies began to move along quite a bit brisker and faster. They had caught the smell of the Indian camp fires just as we were leaving the lake and daylight breaking, this being the coldest time of the day, just before sunrise, and it was pretty sharp that morning, our ponies were all grey with frost on their long hair. They had also warmed up a little in their excitement.

CHAPTER X.

About a couple of hours after sunrise we arrived at Nepapinace's place in a nice little bluff on the banks of the Qu'Appelle river, New Year's morning, 1883. There were about twenty tents in the camp, altogether eighty-seven souls. Some of them had arrived three days ago and some the previous night, whose tracks we had been following. After unhitching our ponies and throwing some hay over the fence to them, we hung up our harness on the trees to keep it from the dogs that seemed to be around in hundreds, all more or less useful, but the breed was simply Indian cur, snarling, snapping, poor and hungry. Some of the hunters had been out early and already killed three or four black tail or jumping deer, which were then being brought in.

Nepapinace met us with his great big smile, and gave us a hearty welcome, and told David Thorne to tell me that the Indians had a large quantity of fur to trade. He appeared to be more than glad that we had arrived. Everybody knew that it was New Year's day, and that this was the day that the store was going to arrive, and here it was, on time.

Shaking hands all around was of course the first act, then giving everybody some tea, sugar, and tobacco, and hoisting the Union Jack on a fairly long flag pole that Nepapinace had placed for that purpose some time before. These were not the Indians that I had supposed were being taken in from the plains, but a band of Saulteaux who had always hunted up and down the valley and to the North, very seldom having hunted on the great plains. They had their wintering quarters for years somewhere in the vicinity of where I now found them camped. I knew several of them, having met them often at Fort Ellice. They were known as Sakimays (Mosquito) band, and were a dandy lot of strong hunters, and very peace loving Indians, always keeping away from the more war-like and restless Indians.

I was known to them all as Me-tik-o-nappie (carpenter). I could now hear my name all over the camp. They all recognized me at once, and here I was among many of my old Ellice friends.

Nepapinace's house was not very large, only one room about 18 x 20 feet, flat sod roof, but they had two large buffalo skin tents pitched outside, where they and the family generally slept. The house was as clean as a new pin. Mrs. Nepapinace, who was also a very pleasant and kind woman, had in the meantime boiled the kettle, giving us some nice venison that had been killed some days before, with bannock and tea. Everyone in the camp was now busy drinking tea, smoking and eating, so David Thorne, our Indian and myself piled into our New Year's dinner, such as it was, and we were glad to have it. We had unlashed our sleighs, spread the wrappers on the floor of the house, opened up all our goods, and arranged them on pole shelves at one end of the room. After dinner we began trading. I first took in all their furs, entered them in my day book, and opened accounts with everyone who had furs. I had a big pile of furs when I got through this operation. Then David and Nepapinace started handing out the goods that each one wanted, while I did the charging up to each account as they were supplied. There was no twine or wrapping paper wasted, each man's purchases were just thrown in a pile on the floor, when his credit was done he simply gathered his stuff up in his arms and hiked it away to his tent, where he and his family (if he had any) could do the admiring act, and divide the spoil.

When we had finished paying them all, we had very little goods left over, just some tea and tobacco and a few odds and ends. I had a big bunch of first class assorted furs. It was the first big trade that I had ever conducted, and I had the feeling that I had been eminently successful, and the Indians were more than pleased. The whole trade only lasted three or four hours, and I had spent all the supplies that was sup-

posed to have lasted me until Spring, but I had the full value of them in furs, and that was what the Company wanted. Nepapinace was tickled to death. He laughed and clapped his hands when the last Indian had finished trading, "Good, good," he said, "O-nish-e-shin-boy, McDonnan, she be glad for dat plenty fur, O-nish-e-shin." I started to check and sort over the fur pile at once, and started David and the Indian to bale them up ready to ship to the Fort. They were chiefly red fox, lynx, wolves, mink, rats, fisher marten, wolverine and a few dressed moose and red deer skins. The Indians were having a merry New Year feast, the beating of drums and singing continued far into the night in most of the tents. By midnight we had everything baled up and ready for shipping, next day. It took me well on towards daylight before I had finished all the papers and reports and requisitions that I had to send back with the shipment, as I had made up my mind to send to the Fort at once for another outfit, at least twice as large as the one I had just disposed of. My letters to the Boss giving him reasons and full information of the whole transaction, and the arrangements I had made with the Indians to meet them again in the Spring, giving full details of all my future intentions up to Spring and asking for his approval. The following day I started David and the Indian with two of the best ponies and sleds back to the Fort, loaded with fur. I had sold the other ponies and sleds to the Indians, hitched up as they stood. The Indians had high hopes of a much larger hunt before they returned again in the Spring, and that band pitched off on the North side of the valley, over the Pheasant Plains towards the Beaver Hills, where furs of all kinds were very plentiful that winter. I heard nothing from the Fort until about the middle of February when the men arrived again with a big outfit for me. The letters from the Boss were everything that could be desired. He was more than pleased with the results of my expedition, and approved of all the suggestions I had submitted him for further

operations. He gave me carteblanche to carry on the trade till spring in the way that I proposed, as he considered it would be in the best interests of the Indians as well as the Company, and wished me the best of luck. I need not say how pleased I was to get those letters and to know that so far I had given him entire satisfaction. I also saw that he was putting greater responsibility upon me, and it was up to me to make good. A few days after the Indians had pitched off, John Setter turned up from the Home Farm, where he was still looking after the widows and orphans and other destitutes on this 36 x 12 block of reservations. I was very glad to meet him again, although I had learned quite a number of Indian words and names, yet I was unable to carry on any kind of an intelligent conversation, although I was studying hard and could already spring a few sentences, even if I sometimes had to quit cold. Before spring, however, I could hold my own, and did not need an interpreter any more in either Salteaux, Cree or French. I had to work hard day and night to get this part of my education which was most necessary for me if I wished to succeed. Mr. Setter spent a few hours with me, and among other things told me that there were now nearly four hundred plain Indians wintering and camping on the different reserves, which comprised this block of land. Some of them were very destitute and it kept him busy travelling all the time among them from one reserve to another. He had come around that way to see if I could give him some tea and tobacco, as he was short of both at the home farm. As luck would have it, tea and tobacco was about all my stock in trade, but I was able to satisfy his requirements. He said he would visit me often as the Farm House was only five or six miles back on the hill, and asked me to go and visit him. He was, he told me, sure only of being at home on Saturdays or Sundays, as on those days he gave out rations at the farm. Nearly all the rest of the time he was travelling from one camp to another. I saw a good deal of him for the

balance of the winter, and made many trips with him when he was making his rounds, and thus got well acquainted with all the Indians, which was of great value to me during the following year, as I made it my business to know every one of them personally, and consequently got all the trade that any of them had to offer. There was always something to trade amongst the poorest of them, and as long as I lived on those reserves they always gave me the first chance, and as I was there for the purpose of securing their good-will and trade for the H. B. C. I left no stones unturned to gain that end, by dealing fairly and squarely with them all.

Nepapinace wanted to build a new house, and thought while he had a carpenter staying with him that the time was ripe. I offered to give him every assistance and work at it along with him until we had it finished. So I drew up an estimate of the number of logs, sleepers, and roof poles it would require. To build a house at that time required only the labour as all the raw material was in the bush right alongside of us. I drew a rough plan of a one-and-a-half storey building with two large bedrooms upstairs. We all went at it, and had all the material ready in a short time. We finished the house and the owner was living in it before I left them in May. He made lots of money out of the house later on as a stopping place for settlers going north from Broadview to the settlements north of the valley. He also put up good stables and became prosperous.

In due season my new outfit of goods arrived. The packers had a pretty hard trip as it was pretty cold and the snow had got deep; but, as David said, they had got through at long last, and had brought me lots of nice English goods this time.

Mr. McDonald sent me a young half-breed boy, Sam Sayr, who would stay with me till spring as he would be useful and handy for me in many ways. I knew Sam. He was one of the servant's sons at the Fort. He was a good boy and

served me very well. I was to return David Thorne and the others and I could keep as many of the horses and sleds as I might require. This was all O. K. as I wanted more horses and sleds for the Indians.

After they had rested a few days, and visited around, I sent David and the two Indians back with one horse and sled and a small pack of furs that I had collected. All the other horses and sleds I kept. I opened up only such goods as I required to pay for the few skins which were beginning to come in from the scattered plain Indians. I had found out what the Indians did not see, they did not desire and besides I wanted to keep a good outfit for the Indians I was sure would bring in a big hunt, and I could not now, on account of the deep snow, get any more supplies from Qu'Appelle and had to make what goods I had spin out until I had completed the spring trade.

I was making good progress in learning the language, at least I was trying to speak it all the time, and would say anything whether it was right or wrong, and many a good laugh Nepapinace and his wife and children had at my expense. To show how hard I was studying it, I would often dream in Indian and carry on a conversation which I could not then do in my waking moments. Mrs. Nepapinace, after giving me a long lesson, one day said: "In another month you will speak Indian as good as I can." I quite understood what she had said, and I replied in as good Indian as I ever spoke afterwards, "If that is true, I will give you the best shawl in the store."

John Setter, who was there, said something to her in Cree which I did not quite catch, and they laughed and laughed. Nepapinace came in and they told him the whole story over again, and then they laughed again. Setter would not believe his ears that I could speak Indian like that so quickly, and said to me in English, "Give her the shawl now, you will never speak better Indian than you have just now." He was

quite satisfied with my proficiency, he taught me a few sentences when we were traveling together among the destitute Indians. Mrs. Nepapinace had been teaching me this special sentence at intervals for several days and I had it down pat, and was anxious to show off before Mr. Setter. My teacher did not give it away either that she had been teaching me this special sentence, which was one of her jokes on me that time. I made her choose the best shawl in the store, and that was all my Indian education ever cost me. Mr. Setter used to say to me, "Dear me, what a fun we had about that shawl." The joke was on me that time.

Since the horses and sleds had come down Sam Sayr and I had travelled a good deal, and visited all the Indians several times, as well as dropping in on Mr. Setter on Saturdays when he was feeding his flock as he used to call the old widows. We would play a game of euchre with him, and have a cup of tea, and exchange news about the conditions of things at the different camps we had visited during the week.

Early in March one of the Sakimay Indians arrived on snowshoes. He told us that they had good luck but were short of some things; they had a lot of fur, also venison. They were about fifteen miles out, and wanted me to go out to see them and bring a few commodities which they required, and to bring back their fur and as much venison as I desired. They also asked that I bring them two horses and two sleds.

This was good news and I agreed to start back with the Indian in the morning. We took three sleds and the Indian, Sam Sayr and myself started in the morning, arriving at their camp before noon. Everything was as the Indian had told me. They all had lots of stuff and were afraid that the fur might get wet coming on towards spring. I fixed up everything with them, and was going to return that night, but one sled would not bring back all the stuff I had got from them, so I had to borrow the two sleds I had just sold them, and

they gave me two fresh horses and another Indian to go with us and bring the two horses and sleds back to the camp the following day. So back we started with three loaded sleighs. I had made a big trade again, and had told each one of the Indians how his account stood. A final settlement and square-up would of course be made when they came back in the spring, the hunting season over. I felt quite tickled over the success of my trip. It was late before we got back, but the whole transaction had taken place within the twenty-four hours. Nepapinace and his wife were just as pleased as I was. They were certainly as much interested in the welfare of the Company's business as if it was their own goods and chattels, and looked upon me as some swift trader, as I never went out on a trip anywhere lately but I brought lots back with me for the Company. Mrs. Nepapinace would always wind up by saying in Indian, "I'm so glad that it was me that taught you to speak the language so that you can now trade properly with any of the Indians."

There was no shawl business in this speech, as I could now hold my own with any of them, but nevertheless I handed her over for a treat all round, two quarters of the fresh killed venison we had just brought home, and the kettle was put on to boil, a thing that happened very often in an Indian camp.

The spring opened up very quickly after this, and in a week or ten days the snow had all gone. I travelled a good deal on horse back now, up, down and across the reserves everywhere. I visited all the Indians at their camps many times and soon knew everyone of them personally and got to be very much interested in all of them.

From reading some magazines that Mr. Setter had kindly given me, I saw that senega or snake root was in great demand in the States. It seemed to be the chief composition in nearly all patent medicines and we had many acres of it growing all over the reserve; in fact there was an abundance of it all

over the country. I knew the root well, as the Indians always used it for their own medicinal preparations. I saw a good chance here for the Indians to earn something out of the ground, especially the plain Crees, as they could not hunt small furs with any degree of success, and here was a job that they could work at all summer. The root was easy to dig, being only about three inches long. All the diggers had to do was to get a stick about two inches in diameter, sharpen the end of it to a point, then push it down alongside of the root and turn the root out of the ground. The roots had to be washed clean, spread out on a blanket and dried in the sun. Senega root was worth all the way from 25c to 85c per pound. I eventually got all the women and children at this work and some of them made as much as $5 a day when they worked all day. Snake root digging soon became a great industry all over the country where there were any Indians or half-breeds, and in subsequent years many of the foreigners and white settlers were successful at it, for several years later when I would be travelling by rail, at any of the little stations from which butter and eggs were shipped, you would always see a few sacks of snake root in the shipment.

I think I was the first to start this snake root industry in Saskatchewan, and I bought and shipped many tons of it to the United States from Crooked Lakes during the years 1884 to 1888. The Indians did not require to be short of anything, all they had to do was to go outside of their tent and dig snake root, yet it was surprising how many lazy ones were among them and these could not be induced to make a living in this way. Work of any kind was beneath their dignity; they would not hesitate to crib a few pounds of what some old cripple woman had dug, washed, dried and prepared if they saw a favourable opportunity. I have seen things like this happen many a time, during my life, and not always among Indians either (neither is it always a matter of snake root, perhaps it is a failing that has, and still exists among some of

the dignified personages of importance that still prey upon the property of others).

The grass was now beginning to grow, and crocuses were in great profusion all over. The Indians were moving their tents on to nice clean patches of prairie, also a few parties had arrived from the plains to take up residence on the reserve, after having spent a hard winter in their fruitless search for buffalo, although ducks and geese were plentiful.

They all had a few skins to trade such as skunk, badger, musquash, and some deer skins, although individually they did not have much to trade, yet being the only trader my collection of furs and curios were perceptibly increasing and I kept moving from one camp to another gathering up, so that I would be ready to start back to Fort Qu'Appelle as soon as my other Indians would arrive after their spring hunt.

One day they all arrived early in the afternoon. Everyone of them had made a splendid hunt. They were all well, having had no sickness or deaths; there were quite a number of births. They had made a considerable quantity of maple sugar, the spring being exceptionally favourable. My first duty was to shake hands all round with big and small, then give them some tea and tobacco and other provisions enough for a meal all round; then they opened their packs and handed me over all their furs to check up so that they could start trading as soon as they had something to eat.

I was more than pleased with the quantity. It was far more than I expected and in quality it was all first class stuff. I fixed up all their accounts and Nepapinace and Sam Sayr were busy opening up the goods that I had reserved for them.

When everything was ready to start trading I called them in from their tents, when Nepapinace and Mrs. Nepapinace, Sam Sayr and myself had a few busy hours. The Indians were talking, laughing, trading, and telling their winter and spring news all at the same time. Blankets, prints, shirts, handkerchiefs, vermillion, looking glasses, tea, tobacco, shot

powder, gun caps, guns, and a hundred and one other things were all going like wild fire as quick as we could hand them out. You will perhaps wonder how I could keep tab in such a rush? It is quite easy when you know how to do it, and the harder you rush the easier it is. It takes practice to become a good Indian trader, some being more expert than others in giving satisfaction. There is none quicker than an Indian to detect an error, and you must learn to trade with them without making any errors, as he checks up all his purchases many times after he goes back to his tent. A mistake could scarcely occur as the trading was nearly all done in even amounts of dollars, pounds or shillings unless you were trading in the made beaver or skin systems, which is much simpler and easier understood by the old Indians, than the currency systems. The main object in trading if you wish to gain and retain the confidence of the Indian is to make no mistakes, and always give him a square deal and honest weight, although some times he may try to get the better of you, especially if he owes you a debt.

A good trader will quite understand what I mean. Square dealing does not always work both ways, but you must always give a square deal. The big spring trade which I had so anxiously looked forward to was all over. I had cleaned up and paid for everything, had no goods left, having sold everything, horses and sleds included. Sam and I had even to part with all our bedding and blankets to complete the trade. All the Indians on the reserve knew that as soon as this bunch came in I would be starting back for the Fort, so a great number of them arrived during the time that the trade was going on, for the purpose of asking me to come back with a big store at Treaty time as they wanted the store to be on the reserve all the time; this was also the unanimous wish of all the Indians.

I told them that I would tell the Boss as soon as I arrived at the Fort and most likely he would do as they wished and

I would send word back by the Indians that I had hired to take me up to the Fort, whether a store would be sent down again or not, but in the meantime let them keep on digging snake root so that there would be something to trade if the store did come soon. So on that understanding I parted with them all. Everything packed in bales and loaded on the carts, we started for Qu'Appelle. I was feeling good. I had had great luck, had done well, and was naturally anxious to see the Boss, and hand him my reports, giving an account of my stewardship. Nothing eventful happened on our trip. It took us three days, and we arrived at the Fort on the 12th of May. we were welcomed back by the Boss and the staff. I handed the Boss my accounts and report, then unloaded the carts into the fur store. George Drever checked them in from the bill of lading, when he was through, he said, "Where is the balance of the goods?" "The goods are all inside those bales that you have checked in," I answered.

"Well, Mack," he said, "by the look of that you certainly have done well. Come on in to the quarters. Your share of what was left at Xmas is still here waiting for you. Man, I'm glad to see you back with us again. Sit doon, sit doon, an mak yersel at home. Hurry up, Calder, because I must be off to the store."

"All right, all right," said Calder, "She is here all safe," and in a twinkling I heard a pop as the cork parted from the bottle, and the invitation to help yourself was there and then taken advantage of by the three of us, with judicious care, three fingers being the limit, and here's a ho and down she goes!

Calder said, "The Boss is mighty well pleased and says you have made a rattling trade, which fully justifies your promotion to postmaster. I guess there is another rise in sight for you. He just handed me your accounts and I will get your balance sheet out in a few minutes, and then we will see exactly how your trade has panned out. Your room is all right and

by the time you get fixed up a bit I will have the balance sheet ready. By Jove! We are all glad to see you back again. Have another before we go?"

"No, thanks, no more just now."

"All right then I'll go, we will have more time after business and the Boss will likely want to see you in his office, as soon as convenient for you, but he will send you word. He is engaged with some one at present. Sure you won't have another? All right then so long for the present, I will send Cap over to give you a hair cut and a shave. He'll be glad to see you, and when he is finished you better give him a horn, you'll find the bottle over there behind the wash stand, and a nice jug of fresh water, but I suppose you had lots of water at Crooked Lakes. Good-bye again." And he was off downstairs to his office.

Cap arrived and I was all fixed up in regulation style in a short time. I also invited him up to the wash stand and refreshed the inner man. Cap had to hurry back to his kitchen, to get the evening meal ready. He said that with an increase in the family he would be fairly worked to death until he got me fed up a little. "You fellows coming in in the spring are always hungry, and cause me no end of work, although I am always glad to see you all, but I will do my best," and he gave a very meaning glance at the wash stand.

"Well, I don't mind if I do. I'm not used to it you know, but I have a bad cold today, and they say this stuff is good to break up a cold." The cold duly surrendered to the attack, and his good health was fully restored (wonderful cure).

Sam Sayr had gone to see his father and mother and sisters. I had given him a half holiday to visit his friends and to come and see me if he wanted anything from the store. I met him just as I was leaving the quarters. He said he wanted to give his father, mother and sisters a little present, that he did not want his blankets and other things that we had traded, but would like to get the value of them in other things from

the store. I said, "All right, Sam, come on to the store," and I fixed him up with all he wanted, and he still had a small credit left on account of wages. He was very glad as I paid him the full price that I had charged the Indians, and he could get new blankets now for the price of his old ones.

They were busy in the store that afternoon. A detachment of Mounted Police had just arrived from Fort McLeod, and there were quite a number of other customers who were strangers to me. I was going back towards the quarters when the Boss called me to his office. He had gone over all my accounts and report, also the balance sheet which Mr. Calder had prepared for him. He was very much satisfied with the whole Crooked Lakes adventure. It had turned out much better than he had anticipated; of course, the whole adventure and results of same would be assumed by Fort Qu'Appelle, nevertheless a distinct statement of the whole transaction would appear in the Qu'Appelle Annual Accounts and that Crooked Lakes would be established as a distinct Post from the 1st of June at the beginning of the new outfit. He said I better go to the store and settle with the Indians who had brought me back, so that they could go away in the morning and also tell them that he would send a big store down there in plenty of time for the Treaty payments. I asked him if he would not tell this good news to the Indians himself, and they would go back better satisfied, to assure their friends that he had told them so with his own mouth. "They are outside now," I said, "and are most anxious to speak with you on the store subject."

"Well," he said, "perhaps that would be the best way. Call them in."

It was all over in a minute. He told them in a few words what the Company would do, and what he expected the Indians at Crooked Lakes to do.

I went to the store and settled up with them. I also made up a parcel for Mr. and Mrs. Nepapinace and their children,

who had been so good to me during the time I stayed with them, and sent it by these Indians who would be back at Crooked Lakes in two days carrying the good news from the Boss' own lips, who also gave them some tobacco for the chiefs and headmen, which would verify their story. I was very glad that everything had turned out so far without any delay.

It was now near supper time, and Crooked Lakes did not require any more attention for a day or two. There were other Posts in the District that required his more immediate attention, and that I could give Drever a hand around the stores for the next few days, when he would again take up the matter. We had a very memorable reunion in the quarters after the stores and offices were closed for the night. Calder and Drever warmly congratulated me on the showing of my trading account and balance sheet. Drever knew all the Indians among whom I had been working as well as many of the plain Indians, who were going on the Crooked Lakes reserve, and was asking me all about them. He had some good friends amongst them who had often asked after him, and many of them sent messages to him by me. In turn he told me of the Qu'Appelle Indians and half-breeds, and their hunting exploits. Since I had left the Fort, Calder had got a new assistant in the office, a Mr. George Shute, an Irishman, and the store had an addition in Albert Iredale, both very nice fellows and good company.

Several boys came to visit at the quarters, spend the evening and have a sing song, as they had an organ now, and some very good musical evenings were enjoyed and appreciated by all. It was certainly a treat to me, after having spent the past few months among the Indians, although I had also learned to appreciate the sound of the tom tom and hi-ya-ya, that I could adapt myself to the camp or the quarters and enjoy one as well as the other, each having, after all, its own peculiarities, both interesting, and you could indulge in degrees

of comparison as to which you preferred, circumstances and location of course, always having a governing control; sociability, business, friendship and duty being prizes at most social gatherings where the male sex predominates and assemble together for mental recreation.

CHAPTER XI.

I had no information as to whether I would be sent back to Crooked Lakes or not. I belonged to the Qu'Appelle staff, and went about my regular duties as usual. I did not stick at any particular kind or class of work, but tackled anything that required to be done, whether outside or inside the stores or offices, and put all the energy I had into the Company's best interests whatever the job in hand might be.

Drever and I used to go for many a long walk in the evenings. Sometimes Calder would join us in our strolls around the village and valley and around by the creek at the back of the Fort. May 31st was the close of the Company's financial year and May was a busy month at every Post in the country, everything had to be on the stock sheets by midnight on the 31st, so consequently there was considerable preparation during the latter part of the month for this annual tale telling, which would disclose the net income of the Lady of Lime Street for the current outfit, as per Profit and Loss account.

We had the fur press all ready and in good order for the annual fur packing which Drever and I had to do; we, of course, had several helpers. The sorting, checking, and packing of the furs required experienced and responsible men who would see that all the furs were in proper condition to be packed, that the proper quantities of the various assortments and grades were correct, that the packs were properly made, tied, cross lashed and ready for shipment to London. Drever and I did this work together for several years in the month of May, and we always called it our holiday.

The inventories and returns from all the Posts in the District were now in, and all the furs shipped. Mr. Calder had just put the finishing touches on, and closed the District Books. The Boss had just completed his annual report on the trade and condition of things generally, throughout his district, which completed and accompanied the annual accounts which

were then promptly despatched to the Head Office, Winnipeg. Swan River District held the record for years against all other Districts, in being first to have its annual accounts arrive at Winnipeg, also in the correctness of its accountancy. This was a big feather in Mr. Calder's cap, and he never failed to keep it up as long as he was District Accountant.

The stage was all clear now for the work of the new outfit. Every Post in the District had contributed its proper share, and the District made a good showing, which gave encouragement to everyone to try his best for the next outfit and if possible make a better showing. This was the spirit that predominated among all the officers and employes from year to year, in the good old days when you and I were young.

The Treaty payments at the different Posts was the next harvest to gather in. Payments generally began about the middle of July. Parliament could not vote the money before the 1st of July as the Dominion financial year at that time ended on June 30.

The Boss had not yet received advice of payment dates at the various Posts in his district. We were giving out treaty advances to the Indians attached to Fort Qu'Appelle since the beginning of the new outfit, Drever and I looking after the Indians, and Albert and the other clerks looking after the white and other English speaking customers. Each day's routine was somewhat similar but never monotonous; always something doing. Every mother's son of an Indian was happy and willing to pay his debts in full when treaty day arrived. So it made pleasant relations all round. Everyone was honest, but when honesty began to disappear in later years, trading in futures became more precarious and greater caution and discrimination had to be exercised, and a book of "Who's Who?" kept.

The treaty means that the Government pays every Indian, man, woman, and child, five dollars in cash each, per annum, as long as the "sun shines, grass grows, and water runs."

Each band is allowed one chief and four headmen or councillors; for his service the chief receives twenty dollars and each headman ten dollars extra per annum. Of course there are many other things that the Government has been obliged to supply them with, such as clothing, provisions, schools, agricultural implements, cattle, and many other things in order to try and make them self supporting; but the five dollars cash, annually was the basic principle, to extinguish the Indians' right and title, and made them wards of the government.

When Mr. McDonald was at home he generally made a round of the store and warehouses once or twice a day to see that everything was properly functioning. But the work of the District kept him pretty busy in his office most of the time when he was not on an inspection trip to one or other of its Posts. Mr. Calder would also make us periodical visits during business hours, to check over some invoices, or get some particulars of shortages or some damaged goods for which he was having claims made out. He also had something to say about cost landed sale prices, railway and inland freights, and a lot of general details in connection with the working of the business with which we were immediately concerned. No advances were given out by us to anyone except an order signed either by the Boss or the Accountant, and so business went merrily on, everyone playing his own part in a united and harmonious whole.

In my early years, the Annual Indent or Requisition on London covered everything for the year, and that was all you received. Then came additional requisitions on Winnipeg followed by monthly, weekly and daily requisitions. Next came telegraphing requisitions to be sent by express, perhaps two or three times a day, then wireless requisitions and other communications from remote and inland Posts. At the present time the Governor and Committee are considering the advisability of an airship transport service for passengers and freight, to the more remote and inland Posts and Districts,

which no doubt will be an accomplished fact before what I am writing reaches the Public, and this all within the past forty-four years.

Things have been moving forward with speed and we have all been playing our little part in some way or other, that will yet accomplish far more wonderful achievements in the exploration of what at present is unknown and unthinkable at our present stage of civilization, which will yet reach far beyond our present conception into the unlimited and infinite spaces of eternity.

Dear Reader, having soared with you into the spaces of eternity, I must now get back to earth and proceed forthwith to Crooked Lakes.

The Boss had appointed me to establish and take charge of the new Post at Crooked Lakes. Mr. Calder had presented me with a set of new books, monthly statement forms and other office supplies. The goods had all been shipped by C. P. R. prepaid from Winnipeg to Broadview, where I was to receive them. I took two wagons with all necessary supplies and equipment from Qu'Appelle, and Johnnie Brass, David Thorne, and Sam Sayr went with me. They were to remain until after treaty anyway, when other arrangements might be made. Finally the Boss handed me a large blue linen lined envelope, containing invoices, shipping bills, Rules and Regulations and instructions, to govern and guide me in the discharge of my new duties, all of which he had talked over with me before, so that there could be no misunderstanding. He had explained everything very minutely to me in all its various details. The envelope was properly sealed with three large seals bearing the impress "Pro pelle cutem" and addressed to the Clerk in Charge at Crooked Lakes, which was now my official address.

"All aboard, get up Dick! Get up Tom!" The wagons moved, and we were on the trail for Crooked Lakes. I felt quite proud as I had every reason to be, and firmly resolved

in my own mind that if attention to duty, energy and faithfulness would gain me a Chief Factorship in the years to come, it would be mine, and I set that, there and then, as the objective that I would aspire to and work for. Many others have done the same thing in other walks of life and also reached their goal. It is good when you start in life to have an object in view even though you may never reach it. You will come somewhere near it, if you stick faithfully to it. It requires a lot of sacrifice and self-denial, many times along the trail, but ultimately you have that greatest of all satisfaction of knowing that you have at least done your duty, and that is worth more in your old age than untold riches, otherwise obtained.

The little lake near the farm house on Chief Little Child's Reserve was about one-and-a-half miles long, had an average width of about fifty yards and a depth of from four to ten feet, with partly gravelly bottom. The beach was sandy, and the lake fed mostly by springs, beautiful, pure, clear water. All about stretched the plain covered with all varieties of wild flowers, little poplar bluffs all in full leaf, making a picturesque surrounding background. It was a most ideal location for a large encampment, lots of wood, water and feed for the horses. It was here that we pitched our 24x24 foot large store tent in the centre of a large circle of about three hundred tents or lodges in five groups, each group being controlled by its own Chief and headmen, the whole camp being controlled by a council of the five chiefs—Loud Voice, Cha-Ka-Chas, Ka-Ke-Westahowe, Little Child, Yellow Calf or Sakimay.

It had taken us some days to put our store in ship shape, and get all our new outfit of goods in from Broadview, among which was one car load of flour and half car of bacon. In the meantime Nepapinace and some of the Indians had brought a splendid long flag staff which was rigged and raised about fifteen yards from the front of the tent towards the lake. Ne-

papinace handed me the flag which I had left with him. All the Indians were about, so it was up to me to hoist the Union Jack, with the big H. B. C. letters on it once more. You can appreciate the effect that the hoisting of the flag in the centre of the scene which I have just described would have, as all eyes of the assembled crowd of natives looked upward, as I slowly pulled the flag up to the mast head, and I was the only white man present, who was also British born. There you are! ! ! I considered that the greatest act of my life up to that time. When I had made the halyard fast I asked the chiefs, who were all standing around me, to wait a minute as I wished to make them a present to be used by the whole camp, and I called to my boys who were standing in front of the store to bring me a chest of tea (60 pounds) half barrel lump sugar (140 pounds), twenty pounds Nigger Head Tobacco, ten sacks flour, and a sack of long clear bacon (200 pounds). When it was all piled around the flagstaff I said: "I make you this present for the Company while we are standing underneath the flag that you now see flying in the breeze. As you all know it is the Great Mother's flag that flies everywhere to protect her children in every land. The Company gives you this present to show you that her breasts are not yet dry. She is thinking of you and has put her flag up to protect you in everything that is right, but will punish anyone that does wrong. This is part of the Treaty that she has caused to be made with you. She is thinking of you and your children today. Take this present and make a feast for the whole camp so that everyone will get a share, and this will be a testimony that the Company has kept her word, and sent you a big store to trade at. Tomorrow I will be ready to trade the snake root that you have been digging all summer, and anything else that any of you may have to exchange for the goods that you see in the store."

A chorus of "Ho, ho, ho," finished this ceremony, and they and the grub disappeared to their tents. They were all satisfied with the way I had spoken to them, and treated

them. I had paid my initiation fee and the store was established in their midst for better or for worse. In a short while there was a curl of smoke coming from the top of each tent, and bannock baking was in full swing, while a good many dogs were also slaughtered to give savory meat for the feast, which was going to begin at sundown.

The flag was taken down at sundown, and run up again at sunrise, this routine with the flag was faithfully attended to every morning and evening during the balance of the summer, and until the camp broke up and they moved into winter quarters on the various reserves or started away on the fall hunt. The Indians enjoyed their tea party and kept it up most of the night, until they had finished most of the grub. What they could not eat, they carried home to their tents for future reference. Some of them were sick next day, and no wonder, from over-indulgence.

They had a large quantity of snake root in the camp, dry and well cured, and I hustled them all up to continue digging. I had a good market for all I could ship and we were doing a good profitable business in snake root up to late autumn.

The Indian Agent, Col. McDonald, did not arrive to pay treaty until early in September. He could not get finished with the Western Indians any sooner. He was trying to do two or three men's work. This was rectified in following years when Indian Agents were appointed to superintend and reside on the various reservations such as Touchwood Hills, Qu'Appelle, File Hills, Crooked Lakes, Fort Pelly, and Birtle, when all treaty payments could begin almost simultaneously all over the country early in July and they were all kept on their own reserves and thus prevented from wandering all over the country, following up from one treaty payment to another all summer and neglecting whatever work they had to do on their own Reserves. If any of them were not present on their own reserves on treaty day, they did not receive their money until the following year. This had the desired effect and

was a great factor in their permanent settlement on their own reserves. I just mention this to show the amount of work and travelling that Col. McDonald had to do in the early days in connection with Treaty No. 4, the gathering in of the Indians from the plains, paying out the treaty money, and settling them on the various reservations, the chief ones being at the points above mentioned.

The Indians as a whole were very improvident in the matter of food. They had no sense of economy. They simply lived from day to day, had no idea of saving anything for a rainy day, and no matter how much they had they would spend it all. They were always short of something, and this was the most distressing feature in dealing with them. You had to guide them in their purchases and see that they had a little of all that was necessary for the day, or you would have to give them credit, which often they could not conveniently pay, and led many of them to be crooked, and tried to get credit at several places, so that at last they were hopelessly in debt all round and would repudiate the whole thing from utter inability to pay. A great many of the Free Traders lost heavily in this way, as well as the Hudson's Bay Company. When an Indian died his debts all died with him. It required a great deal of caution and discernment to handle your Indians and Post, especially where pedlars and free traders were popping up now and again, and there were always a number of the Jew element around after their money about treaty time. So you see that trading with some classes of Indians was not as rosy as some people thought for. Many of the free traders and Jew pedlars went broke year after year, but there were always a new crop of them turned up to go through the same experience. This was the hardest kind of opposition we had to contend with, as they very often carried ilegitimate goods, which were very injurious to the Indians in many ways. A great many of the Indians were not at the making of the first treaty, and in consequence would only receive their first

payment this year. In such cases they were paid for two years each year until they caught up, that is, they were paid for the current year, and one back year until they were paid from the time the treaty was first made up to date, and then only for the current year afterwards. The head of each family drew the money for the whole family; say a family of eight souls, the head would draw forty dollars, and if he had any back payment for the same number he would draw altogether eighty dollars, and so on through each band and family.

The agent being later in coming than was expected, and the bulk of their snake root being expended, they wanted to start to take advances on their treaty money. I agreed, and accordingly arranged with Chiefs and headmen how we were to proceed, and how payments were to be made. We came to a hard and fast agreement, and after each Chief had consulted with his band the whole camp signified their willingness to carry out the agreement to the letter. There was, as usual, a whole lot of talk until it was thoroughly understood by every one in the camp—and the store was opened up for treaty advances. There were no lack of customers from then until treaty day. Of course it entailed a great deal of extra work, as I had to limit them to a certain amount each day in order to make it spin out, otherwise they would draw the whole thing in one day. I kept them at the snake root as well, and only gave treaty advances when it was absolutely necessary, or when the snake root would not cover some certain articles of clothing or food that they wished to procure. I also had to keep them in good humour, same as children. I gave out advances until the day the agent arrived, and had all their accounts made up to date.

The Boss came down the day before the treaty on one of his inspection trips, and brought Drever with him to give me a hand during the treaty week. Their treaty at Qu'Appelle and the other Northern and Western reserves was all over. The agent was going to start paying in the morning, and I was

pretty busy getting everything into ship shape as I had to do all the collecting myself. The Boss and Drever looked over all the accounts and advances. They said nothing, but looked at each other, as much as to say, "Has this fellow gone mad, to give out so much advances?" The Boss said: "I think you have your work cut out for the next few days. I see a lot of free traders on the ground. I'm afraid you will have great difficulty in collecting all these accounts. I will stay through the payments and see how you come out. You have advanced far too much. Your Indians are all well dressed and look as if they had already received their treaty money."

Drever said, "Well I guess Mack and I will pretty nearly sweep the board, anyhow we will hit her a lick in the morning, and by tomorrow night we will be able to tell more about it."

I had told Drever the arrangement I had made with the Indians, and he was quite satisfied that it would pan out all right.

Loud Voice's band were the first paid. They all sat around the agent's tent, until the last member of the band was paid, then old Loud Voice got up and marched his whole band right over to the store, and made them all sit down in a circle (about three hundred of them). Drever and the rest of my men were all standing outside of the store to see what was going to happen. Loud Voice got up and shook hands with me, and made a short speech to his band. He said: "My grandchild was with us last winter. He has been with us this summer and has been good to us till this day. We made a bargain with him. He has done his part, we now must do our part. Our money is in our hands, he has already bought most of it, and now it is our turn to keep our promise and hand him all the money we have just received from the agent, and I will be the first one to fulfil my promise," and he handed me over his pile of bills, crisp and new without a crease in them. I counted the money, marked it down on my list, and

gave him an I. O. U. on the store for the balance that was coming to him. He stood beside me and called up every one of his band as fast as I could make the entries and write the I. O. U.'s, which they took into the store, and trading began with Drever at the head of it. When the last one of the band handed me his money, I had every dollar that the agent had given them. The Boss was thunderstruck. I said, "Mr. McDonald, I promised that you would give them a small present of tea and tobacco as soon as I told you that they had all paid me." He gladly made the present, and I went into the store to help trading out the I. O. U.'s which I had given them. It was an all night job now, as the next band would be on deck in the morning. Drever said to me, "God! Mack, you have got them well trained. But how about the other bands?" I said, "Every band will do just the same as you have seen done today." And so they did. Each band came up as they were paid by the Agent, and did exactly the same. We had three days of it in the store night and day. The third day the Boss took off his coat and went at the trading with the rest of us. Five hours after the agent had finished paying, my cash balanced exactly with the amount the agent had paid out. We had made a clean sweep, and the treaty payments at Crooked Lakes were over for that year.

CHAPTER XII.

The Boss had a long talk with all the Indians. He told them that the store would winter at Crooked Lakes, and that I would be in charge of it. Drever and the other lads had taken stock and packed up the few remaining goods that we had on hand. I had made out a large requisition on Winnipeg for supplies which I would require for the winter trade, to be shipped forthwith to Broadview, freight prepaid. We selected a site where I would pitch the tent for the winter, about one hundred yards from the Indian farm house and warehouse, on the south side of a nice poplar bluff, which would provide good shelter from storms. The Agent and his staff had gone. The Indians having had their fling were pitching off to their respective reserves where they would have better hunting. There was nothing to hunt around the big camp any more, only a few scattered tents remained, and they were pitching on to clean prairie among the scattered bluffs and sloughs, where they could get a pot shot at ducks and prairie chickens, which were plentiful.

Brass and the other two lads would stay with me until we got the tent and everything fixed up, when they would return to Qu'Appelle. The Boss and Drever were ready to go back. The former had got the cash and all the documents and statements in connection with the business at Crooked Lakes up to date, and everything checked over. He was well satisfied with his inspection and especially so with the way the treaty part of it was conducted and the results obtained.

Wishing us all good-bye and good luck they started together early in the morning of a very beautiful day, with a first class team and buckboard. That same evening they intended reaching Qu'Appelle, eighty miles away.

I had procured just enough lumber and scantling for the floor and walls of the tent. As soon as we had the floor laid and the frame up we pitched the big tent over it. David and

Sam banked it up all around the foundation, while Johnnie and I put in the shelves and counter, and there was my store and wintering quarters all complete and ready for occupation. I gave the boys a couple of holidays now to visit and ride around the reserves and incidentally hunt some ducks and chickens for our own use. I had received the invoices of the new outfit and expected it to arrive at Broadview at any time, when we would freight it in with our own teams, after which the boys would all return to Qu'Appelle for the winter. Billy Long Claws, an Indian boy whom I knew at Fort Ellice, arrived one day to visit me, coming all the way from Fort Ellice. We had always been good friends. He said he liked me, and made no bones about it. I felt quite flattered and said: "I like you, Billy, and always thought a lot of you."

"I want to stay and work for you all winter," he replied. I wanted a couple of smart young fellows for the winter, so I hired him, and Billy stayed and worked for me for three years. I never had a better man. He was clean, active, perfectly honest and trustworthy, and willing to do anything. In a short time he could trade in the store as good as myself. Very often I left him in charge of everything when I had to go away for a few days after some Indians. He fell in love with one of Necan-e-quanape's daughters, a very nice, quiet Indian girl of eighteen years, married her, and wanted to take her back to his reserve at Fort Ellice.

I was never so sorry to part with any man as I was with Billy. He was a genuine, good and true young man. I gave his wife a present of a horse and a covered Red River cart, and Billy rode ahead and she followed on the trail to Fort Ellice, where he made a good living on the reserve raising cattle and grain. They were both happy and raised a nice little family af young Indians, all of whom were educated at the Industrial School and duly baptized by Father DeCorby. Billy was a good man for the Company, and turned out to be a good man for himself.

My boys have all gone back to Qu'Appelle with the two teams we brought down, and Billy and I are holding the Fort. Hilton Keith, a clerk of the Indian Department, has been put in charge of the home farm and Government Supplies, and a system of issuing rations weekly to the poor and destitute widows and orphans has been inaugurated. He has to travel around with the supplies, to any that are not able to come after them. Keith and I chum it, and get along well together. He visits frequently at the store, and I go over some evenings and have a few games of cribbage. It has been a long fall, splendid for those who are away hunting. Red foxes are said to be very plentiful, and other furs up to the average, good prospects as far as fur is concerned. The ground froze up rather early although we have had no snow. The freeze up, however, has put a kink in the supply of snake root, and there will be no more till next spring, which will put the old people short on tea and tobacco, and other necessaries, that they have been able to purchase with its aid.

New Year had brought all my hunters of last winter back with big hunts again. This winter many of the others who tried to hunt have killed little or nothing, and are going to be very hard up before spring as there are no rabbits at all and the snow is now very deep, and the weather very cold. Keith has written to the Indian Commissioner at Regina for instructions to assist some of the families that have returned without any hunt, and have no means of support for themselves and children. All these newcomers had been receiving a fairly adequate ration, and with what they were able to hunt was sufficient to keep them going, but this being a very hard winter, and no rabbits or anything else which they could secure for food, put them on the verge of starvation, at least they were very hungry. When Keith's instructions came from the Assistant Indian Commissioner they were not to increase, but rather reduce the amount of rations he was issuing. There had been grumbling all through January. Now it was well on into

February. The Indians were making stiffer demands on Keith every ration day for more grub. Keith told me what his instructions were, and that he intended to carry them out. I said: "Keith, for God's sake, do not reduce their rations any lower, or there certainly will be trouble." He carried out the Assistant Commissioner's instructions. A few of the Indians died. The others came time and again asked for more grub which they were denied. Finally they broke into the Government storehouse, threw out as much flour and bacon as they wanted, and threw Keith out on the top of it.

I ran up from the store in time to save Keith's life, took him away from them, and told him what a foolish mistake he had made. Before I got him to my store he took one of the fits which he was subject to and remained unconscious for fully an hour.

In the meantime the Indians were loading up their jumpers with flour and bacon, and making a general distribution to those present and sending flour and bacon on to those who were too feeble to come after it. It was very cold that morning, about thirty degrees below zero. After the Indians had divided up the flour and bacon they came to the store, and of course, were very excited, but they offered me no violence, only some of my best friends among them said in a jocular way that they had come in to clean out my store also, as they wanted tea, tobacco, sugar, rice and currants so that they might have one good feed before they all died of starvation.

I told them not to touch anything, that I had been helping many of them a good deal all winter, and was very sorry for what they had done in a moment of excitement, through the foolhardiness of one of the young men, for which all the Indians would now be held responsible by the Government.

I gave them what they wanted, and they all went their way to prepare the feast, having plenty of grub for the time being for themselves and families.

What they had done called for quick action on the part of the Government, and a detachment of Mounted Police were sent down from Regina. Things did not look at all healthy for a day or two. Excitement ran high all over the Reserve. The young warriors repaired to a building in the valley, all fully armed and in their war-paint. They barricaded the building and resisted arrest. Three of the ringleaders were ultimately persuaded to give themselves up and go to Regina for trial. At the trial they argued that the Assistant Indian Commissioner had cut down their rations in a manner which constituted a breach of faith and that they helped themselves to the flour and bacon because they were hungry. They were given suspended sentence and discharged, it being fully explained to them what that meant. It was very lucky for the Mounted Police that the Indians had had a good feed, so that their tempers were somewhat cooled off by their stomachs being full, or none of them would have come out of that valley alive, hampered as they were with buffalo coats, deep snow, and had only side arms. I shudder yet when I think of what might have occurred had a shot been fired even by accident. "There is many a slip betwixt the cup and the lip," and anyway that great tragedy was averted by a bloodless battle.

I reported all the details of the affair to the Company at the time and received their thanks for the manner in which I handled the Indians, and prevented them from looting our stores. The rations were increased after that, but it took some time for the excitement of the whole episode to die out. There were over one thousand Indians who might have been implicated, which might well have been a most serious thing for the Government as well as the Indians, and was only averted by almost superhuman diplomacy.

None of my real hunters were mixed up in this, as they were all away at their hunting grounds, having left after New Year as soon as they had finished their big trade.

We had passed through a very cold and stormy winter on the reserve, but now the ducks and geese were with us again, and things were improving fast, especially in the grub line. Hilton Keith was called in to the Regina office and my old friend Peter Hourie was sent to take charge of the Home Farm, and all the interests of the Indian Department and Indians at Crooked Lakes. Had this been done the previous fall there would have been no trouble, and much less actual expense.

The number of good hunters who were out were more than double those of the previous winter. I had heard from some of them. They had all made good hunts since New Year, and would be back somewhat earlier than they were the previous spring.

Peter Hourie had got a farm instructor and teams, all busy in the large field and was going to raise all kinds of vegetables, roots, and grain that year, and start educating some of the more willing ones to see the advantages that lay in farming.

The hunters were now beginnig to turn up from all sides, and Billy and I were kept on the jump at the store. The trade more than doubled that of last spring and the end of my first complete outfit was most satisfactory to myself and the Company. My new outfit was on the shelves and snake root was operating again. The Treaty was going to be paid first at Crooked Lakes this year. They were going to have a Sun dance or Thirsty dance. This lasts for three days and three nights, during which time none of the participants either eat or drink. This was one of the greatest, if not the greatest, ceremonials that the Indians indulged in, and many strange Indians from all over the country were arriving to take part in it, among them many Medicine men, medicine bags, and totems, and a most elaborate display of scanty costumes. It was the real circus of the year, and while somewhat of a religious ceremony, you could not have called it Christianity. It was the Indians' system of worship, sacrifice, and thanksgiving to the great

spirit and ruler of the happy hunting grounds. Some of the ceremonies in connection with it were very strange and cruel to those who voluntarily surrendered themselves to the tortures which were inflicted on many of the candidates in order to try and prove their fortitude and endurance in the fulfilment of the vows which they had taken upon themselves to perform before all the people, and thus appeal to the Great Spirit for protection from thunder and lightning, hunger, sickness, and death, and the reverse to all their enemies.

After a few years the government prohibited the practice of this Thirsty dance in all parts of the Indian country on humanitarian grounds, and it passed into the discard many years ago, as well as many other primitive absurdities and wonderfully venerable superstitions which were believed in and practised by many ancient savage branches of the human race, from which the most civilized are not yet very far removed, when the veneer is worn off and the civilized control temporarily abandoned.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Thirsty dance was over, the treaty had been paid. The Boss, Drever, and another young clerk came down this year again to assist me at the payments, and together with my own two men I had a large enough staff to handle the crowd. Many of the visitors to the Thirsty dance tarried until after the treaty before returning to their own reservations. There were also a goodly number added to the pay roll who were not here last year, so that the amount paid out was considerably in excess of the previous treaty.

I followed the same system of collecting as last year, and the result was practically the same, only the total was a good deal larger. The early payment in July was much more satisfactory all round. Next year agency buildings were to be built and the agent would reside permanently on the reserve. Farm instructors were to placed on each reserve, where buildings would also be erected for their accommodation, oxen, farm implements, seed and young cattle were also to be issued to the Indians on loan, and general farming and stock raising would henceforward be the recognized industry. Of course, all these buildings and chattels would continue to be the property of the department, and could not be disposed of without the authority of the agent, and then especially in the case of live stock, had to be replaced so that the increase would not diminish. Everything except their personal property, hunts, and ponies, would be under the control and supervision of the government through the Indian Commissioner and agents. This was the proposed policy and system that was being inaugurated at every group of reserves throughout the territories in order to try to make all the Indians self supporting in the matter of food, which was the all absorbing question at that time, as rationing all the Indians could not continue indefinitely.

Day schools and industrial boarding schools were also being established at different points, supervised and regularly

inspected by the government. Everything was going forward with as rapid despatch as circumstances and conditions would permit for the advancement, betterment and education of the Indians, although progress in many cases was exceedingly slow and very discouraging to many of those who were trying to put the scheme into practical operation, yet it was a big move by the government in the right direction, and proved in a few years to be well worth the expenditure it entailed and became advantageous to the Indian, the government and the country.

The fall hunt was over. It had turned out very good. All the Indians arrived at the usual time, about New Year, and did their usual amount of trading, but did not seem willing to start out hunting again as quickly as they had done the previous year.

We had all kinds of Indian rumors during the fall and winter of 1884, mysterious Indian and half-breed strangers appeared among the Indians on the reserves from time to time, and disappeared again as mysteriously, but there was always undue excitement among the Indians after these periodical visits. Most of the half-breeds who were living with Indian women on the reserve had moved away in the fall, the excuse they gave their women being that they were going to visit some of their relations at Battleford or some other far distant point and would possibly not return till spring.

I thought that the hunters had heard some news which was keeping them hanging round. One day they all moved away, and as I thought had gone back to their hunting grounds.

About the end of January Peter Hourie came in to the store and said: "Some more of those strange Indians from Saskatchewan are prowling round the reserves again. We must keep a strict watch because they are exciting the Indians about something that they are not telling us. They left again this morning and nobody seems to know which way they have gone. There is something in the wind that is not good, and we must find it out, and besides your hunters have not gone back to their

hunting and are all still on the reserve. I saw some of them yesterday, but did not speak to any of them. But some of the other Indians tell me that they had not gone away yet, there may be more truth in what we have been hearing all winter about another Riel rebellion in Saskatchewan, than we have given attention to. Anyway we better keep our eyes and ears open, and try to find out what it is all about, because there is no reason, locally, why they should be so excited."

Rumours were, however, becoming more persistent that the French half-breeds, with Riel at their head, were geing to start a rebellion to obtain their rights from the government, and that there would be great doings before the grass was green again. The young braves on the reserve were holding secret councils. This was a very uncommon proceeding and most unusual in the winter season. I found out from some of the women what it was all about. Those strangers who had been paying apparently friendly visits were under the instructions of Riel, and their business and message was to excite and rouse up the Indians to go on the war path; to be on their guard, and prepare themselves for anything; to plunder, rob, and kill as soon as they got the signal; that Riel was going to bring back the buffalo again. The whole country would be theirs and they would have plenty to eat only they must be ready to do Riel's bidding at any moment, and to make them doubly sure of his great power, that on a certain day he would cause the sun to be darkened at noon in a clear sky, so that they would all see his sign of power and might in the heavens. (There was a total eclipse of the sun about that time).

A whole lot of stuff of this nature had been talked into them by these runners. No wonder these superstitious, half barbarian savages were excited and thirsting for blood, and conditions were beginning to have a very serious aspect. Although we were far away and many of the wild rumors were utterly false and became greatly exaggerated as they passed

from mouth to mouth, yet there was enough truth in them to realize that there was imminent trouble and danger brewing in Saskatchewan.

It was no Indian affair. It was entirely a matter between the government, the French half-breeds and Riel, but there was great danger that the Indians would be drawn into it, and for this purpose Riel had these runners all over the country among the Indians to excite and claim their assistance. If it should come to open rebellion, he wanted them as his allies.

On the 26th of March, 1885, at Duck Lake, the first shot was fired, where several volunteer citizens of Prince Albert, North West Mounted Policemen, and a number of the half-breed rebels were either killed or wounded. The long talked of rebellion had broken out. The news spread like wild-fire throughout the Dominion. Troops were rushed from the east under command of General Middleton. The sound of war was in the air.

As soon as General Middleton arrived Peter Hourie was appointed official interpreter for the general and his staff, and was hurried away to Qu'Appelle station to join him there. Hon. Edgar Dewdney was then Lieut.-Governor of the North West Territories, and he arranged with Joseph Wrigley, Chief Commissioner of the Hudson's Bay Company, that I would take full charge of all the government supplies and provisions at Crooked Lakes, in addition to my Hudson's Bay duties. My instructions were to keep the Indians on the reserve at all costs and use my own discretion as to ways, means and expenditures. I got busy and called a meeting of all the chiefs and old men to come to the store. I gave them a cup of tea, and a smoke, then I told them that I knew everything that was going on at their council meetings, although they had been trying to hide it from me. How mad and foolish they were to listen to all the stories which were being carried about the reserves, by men who did not care for them, only to the extent that they could use them for their diabolical purposes, and certainly not for

the good of the Indians. No matter what Riel was doing it was no concern of theirs. The government had made a treaty with them, and they would also look after Riel and punish him if he was doing anything wrong. "Why do you not call me to your councils lately, as you used to?" I asked them. "Have I not always told you the truth and helped you all, many times? And now you are listening to men with forked tongues, who will bring much trouble upon you if you believe their lies. The Company never told you anything but what was good, and I am speaking now what the Company has asked me to tell you, and for this purpose I have asked you to come here in daylight, as I had nothing but truth to tell you and all the other Indians who are here listening to me.

"I ask you all to listen, and to stop your secret councils, and let the young men listen to what you say. This is the news which brought you together here to learn, and I want you to tell it to all the young men and the old men on the reserves so that they will know later that I have spoken the truth, and will always tell you what is right, so that you will not get into any trouble again like what happened last spring. I have finished, and if any one of you wishes to speak I will now listen."

After a long pause old Ka-kay-she-way, the Company's old chief, got up and shook hands with me. That was the customary way to begin a speech.

He always called me his grandchild. The English of his name is "Loud Voice." He was an old man then, of over ninety years, a big man, straight as an arrow, with a strong face, and long grey hair. He began:

"My grandchild! We have listened to your words. They are the words of the Company. My grandchild has made us ashamed. He has lived with us and helped us many moons. Look at my medal. The Company gave me this, because they found me true and faithful. If I did not intend to listen to your words now, I would throw it at you; but your words make me to love it better than ever, and I will wear it closer to my breast,

and you will all know that I have listened to the words of my grandchild, which we all find good, and will tell them to all our Indians, so that my grandchild will not have reason to speak words to us again that we will be ashamed to answer. My grandchild, I have answered you on behalf of all the old men present who have listened to your words this day. I have spoken."

Another handshake and the meeting was over and we all understood each other from that day. The old Chief Loud Voice died shortly after this. He was the greatest of all the plain Cree chiefs. He was a great ventriloquist, and a long distance conjuror. You could hear him from a long distance, quite distinctly in the early mornings calling up his tribe from their slumbers, and the echo was often heard, when he raised his voice in measured tones, in the Qu'Appelle valley.

He gave his medal to his old wife, and told her always to do what the Company told her, and listen to their officers after he was dead and gone and it would be well with her. This identical medal had a very interesting subsequent history, during the lifetime of the old queen, as we used to call her, and played its part in the making of history. It is now in the possession of D. H. McDonald, of Fort Qu'Appelle, with its complete history attached.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Rebellion had now broken out and here I was all alone. Indian signal fires, and signal smokes could be seen all about. Indian runners carrying rumours were everywhere. Most of these rumours false, but nevertheless causing great excitement. One of the most persistent that the plains were all being covered over with buffalo again.

The white settlers were in dread and fear of a general Indian uprising. Engines were kept continually hitched up to coaches at Broadview to take women and children away at the first signs of uprising. Volunteer scouts were watching between Broadview and the reserve, a distance of only twelve or fifteen miles from where the bulk of the Indians were. These scouts came to me on two occasions and begged me to go away with them as I was the only white man on the Reserve and was only remaining there to be scalped. I told them they had better all go, as no one could say what would happen any day, that all reports were very startling, and a great many of them were false, yet I thought the women and children should be moved away from Broadview without any delay, as there was great danger of the Indians from Moose Mountain coming in that way. I said "I think I have the confidence of the Indians even if they are on the war path. I will not go with you, I have a duty to perform. I will stay here among the Indians and try my best to hold them on the Reserve, and should I be the first victim to lose my scalp they will have to do some climbing to get it. I thank you ever so much, as well as the citizens of Broadview for your kind offer and intentions on my behalf, but I cannot and will not leave my Post alive."

They saw that I meant what I said, and this being the second time they had come out for me they started back for Broadview, and I did not see any of them again, until after Batoche was taken and the Rebellion at an end.

I sure was alone now, as far as white people were concerned, yet I had what I considered many good friends among the Indians, with whom I had grown up and known for the past nine years. I did not feel or realize that I was in any personal danger, and had no fear whatever for my own safety during the whole period of the disturbance. However, I was at my wits' end as to what to do next to prevent the Indians from leaving the Reserves and going on the warpath. In spite of all I could do there was a turbulent element among the young braves who were all painted and tatooed, holding nightly councils and ready to go while the old men's councils in a separate lodge were making use of all their restraining influence and power to prevent them, which caused a regular deadlock for several days.

I was by this time fully conversant with their plan of action. They intended to move West on the North side of the Valley, cross the Pheasant plains where there was a number of white settlers, and of course plunder as they went, and join the File Hill Indians; they then intended to capture Fort Qu'Appelle, and remain there until they were joined by the Moose Mountain Indians from the South, who would come in by way of Indian Head. After that, whatever circumstances might develop or require. Such was the program that they had been promulgating day and night for a week, while I was gorging them on flour, bacon, and tea and plugging the old men to put greater vim and exertion in their persuasions to hold the young men on the Reserve.

I could see that the old men were weakening as the Rebellion was progressing. There had been Duck Lake, Fish Creek, Cut-Knife Creek, and now they were at Batoche. This was my most critical period, and I had to do something desperate or they were gone, so I forced my way into their council one night about midnight, and harangued them for over two hours. I said:

"You have broken faith with your dead Chief. You are not doing what he taught you. You are like drunken men. Your words are not good, your plans are bad. I have lived among you as a brother, I am forced to speak my mind, I know you all and you all know me; stop your madness. This fight has nothing to do with you, it is not an Indian quarrel, you have nothing to gain. Are you not well off here? Am I not giving you plenty to eat? Plenty tea and sugar to drink? Plenty of tobacco to smoke? Is it because you are all so well off that you want to do all this evil that you are planning and proposing? Do you think that it will help you? This is not your affair, you have nothing to do with it. You have been listening to lies and liars and you have excited yourselves so much that you think all these liars are telling the truth. They are liars everyone and you have not heard any truth. Listen! Has any one of you ever known me to tell you a lie? Look to the East. Daylight is coming. Your minds are also opening to see. Listen! I will tell you the truth once more before the Sun rises.

"The Government is strong. The Company is strong. Are you as strong as they are? They are feeding you and your wives and little children. Is that the reason you want to fight and kill them, because they are good to you and taking care of you? If you leave here on the errand you have been planning you will have to leave your wives and children here. You will all be shot or hanged and will never come back to see your children again. Your wives and children will starve to death here and you will be their murderers. Listen! The sun is just rising. Stop here on the Reserve where you are. I have spoken and told you the truth. It is for you now, old men, young men and women who have heard my words to make your decision before it is too late."

No one spoke, but I was given to understand that I would receive a message at the store before noon. I had done all I could whatever would be the result, had played my last card

and was very much exhausted. I slept for a couple of hours fully dressed as I had done for several weeks. About ten o'clock in the morning, three or four of the Headmen came to the store and made all kinds of demands on me for grub. They were going to make a big feast, and going to have a big talk. I saw the situation at once. I had hit them some place, and could divert their attention from the everlasting council meetings that were in constant session for days and days. I knew they were only trying me, as it took no small amount of grub to make a general feast. They did not expect me to agree to their demand at all, and then would have something to grumble at. I said, "Yes, sure I will give you all the grub you want for a big feast, and call all the Indians to eat and we will all have a good time."

I had them faded, and shot the grub out to them, telling them, if that was not enough, I would give them some more. It was only a matter of some extra flour, bacon and tea. The stuff was handed over to the women, who began to prepare it for the feast, and word was sent to every one to come and eat and bring their own cup with them.

The feast lasted all that night and the following day, and they displayed some wonderful appetites during that time. I had them where the hair was short, and I knew it.

Dear reader, if ever you have anything to do with wild, unruly Indians, kindness, firmness, truthfulness, not too much familiarity, lots of grub, tea, and tobacco will overcome nearly every difficulty, and leave you master of the situation. I proved it, to my own satisfaction before this occasion, and many times afterwards. Properly applied at the right time, I have never known it to be a failure, and it certainly had its charm at the critical period of which I write, and saved many citizens of the Dominion of Canada in 1885.

The transportation of troops and war supplies was the salvation of all the settlers in the country at that time. Everyone who could raise a team of horses or a yoke of oxen, were

on the job at ten dollars per day. It paid better than any crop they could raise. The climatic conditions improved and the country started a new era and a prosperous career.

A few days after the feast, news arrived that Batoche was taken, the rebels defeated and Riel taken prisoner, and that the war was over. It was only then that I realized the imminent danger that I had successfully passed through, and the bottom was completely knocked out of every Indian on the Reserve and I could lead them with a silk thread after that. I also did not fail to "rub it in" good and plenty, to many of the know-alls and hot heads who were so brave a short time before. They were completely subdued and quite tractable ever after, there being no more trouble with any of them during my sojourn among them.

Riel was captured by Thomas Hourie near Batoche, brought to Regina and handed over to the R. N. W. M. Police by Capt. George Young, of the Winnipeg Field Batteries. He was confined to jail May 23rd, 1885. He was sentenced to be hanged for treason at Regina on Sept. 18th, 1885. The case was appealed to the court of appeal in Manitoba, and also to the Privy Council, but the judgment was affirmed by both Courts, and he was hanged at Regina on November 16th, 1885, at 8 o'clock a. m. and his body was buried at St. Boniface in the French cemetery across the Red River from Winnipeg.

There is very little more to be said by me except that I received through the Company the thanks of the Lieutenant-Governor, accompanied by an official cheque, which precluded me from making any future claim against the Canadian Government for services rendered. I also received the thanks of the Hudson's Bay Company for the very able and successful way in which I had handled the Indians under my charge and kept them on their Reserves.

It may be interesting to go back some years, to find the cause and chain of circumstances which led up to, and culminated in, this ever to be deplored 26th of March, 1885. I

will be as brief as possible, and will at once say that the Rebellion of 1869-70 and the Rebellion of 1885, was caused by ambitious and malicious aspirations of the wily Riel, having at the bottom of it all selfish aggrandizement at the expense of a few half-breeds, whom he was using as tools in trying to extort more money from the Government for his own private use. Then he would leave them in the lurch, as he had done after the 1870 affair, when he pocketed the money that was paid him to leave the country for the time being and took up his residence in the United States, being at that time a fugitive from justice.

Louis Riel was a naturalized citizen of the United States. He was teaching school in Montana in 1884, when he was invited by some influential half-breeds in Saskatchewan to come to Canada and assist them in impressing their wishes upon the Government at Ottawa, to grant them scrip to extinguish their rights, as was being done with the Indians by treaty.

Riel saw a chance here to make another claim for indemnity on the Government, if he would again leave the country, and he claimed $100,000, but said he would take $35,000, in cash, and go at once. That was in December, 1884.

He claimed that the Canadian Government owed him about $100,000, and that he was practically the half-breed question. "If I am satisfied, the half-breeds will be," he said. The half-breeds began to smell a rat now, and said if the Federal Government should grant him this the half-breed question would still remain the same, and Riel would be the only one to profit, at their expense.

Louis Riel was educated for the Priesthood. He was extremely visionary and dangerously imaginary. He had two special strings to his bow at this time. He wanted to form and create a Republic with himself as President. He had offered all kinds of appointments to his Lieutenants and followers, coupled with untold wealth; or he would take

$100,000 for his share, and leave the country. The former his objective, the latter his alternative. He did not attain either, but paid the supreme price of his ambition, treachery and greed, at Regina, on November 16, 1885, after having been given a fair and just trial.

Following the Rebellion there were very hard times all over the country for a few years, among the white settlers as well as the half-breeds, on account of the great drought which prevailed, as well as gophers and early frosts.

Many of the settlers were leaving the country financially broke and disheartened, and had no interest, neither did they care whether the half-breeds got scrip or not. They could have the whole country to themselves as far as those leaving were concerned. Others were unable to leave, and had to struggle on as best they could. Many of the settlers sold their homesteads (160 acres) for a mere pittance, in order to get enough grub to take them out of the dried up and frozen country as quickly as posible. The outlook was certainly bleak at that time.

The half-breeds were not in any better position. Many of them moving west towards Battleford and Prince Albert, where they thought they might be able to make some kind of a living. As it turned out afterwards, they had an inkling of what might take place, as they expected that they would get the much talked of scrip that they were to get from the Government; at least it was then being urgently applied for by the Saskatchewan half-breeds.

The hunters not having gone out after New Year, the total fur returns for the outfit ending May 31, 1885, was much reduced in volume, yet the total business from other sources exceeded that of the previous year, and Billy and I were very pleased to find ourselves alive, and ready to start another Outfit with more peaceful prospects ahead. We had had a ripping, stirring spring time which I had no desire to see repeated. Twice through that kind of game is enough,

and we settled down to treaty advances again. The Indians were all hard up, not having had any spring hunt worth speaking of. During the year the anticipated building of agencies and farm instructors' houses on the various reserves were much delayed, and in many cases were postponed for another year, until the mists of rebellion had cleared away. The Government busied itself in issuing the long deferred scrip to the half-breeds, and things became gradually normal again.

The value of the scrip issued were either $160 cash or 160 acres of land to each individual half-breed, whichever they preferred. Land was not very valuable at that time, and many of them took the $160 cash scrip, and disposed of them as quickly as the Indians did with their treaty money. In a very short time they were as poor as they were before and in an even worse condition, as they had no further rights to extinguish.

The following year the Agency buildings were completed, and Col. McDonald was appointed to be the resident agent, and had taken up residence with his family and staff of clerks. An instructor is also in each reserve in very comfortable quarters, and the whole 36 x 12 miles reserve represents a huge farm, with stock, grain, hay, wood, and water in sufficient quantities all within the area, and a few scattered small patches of cultivation were in evidence here and there all over.

It was a beginning towards self support, which was the main object in view by the Government. The area under cultivation increased from year to year, so much that the second year they had to get a traction steam threshing outfit, and in a few years many of them were self supporting and comfortably well-to-do, while many others were hopelessly useless as farmers or stock raisers, especially the old people. These, however, gradually passed away to the happy hunting grounds, to join the buffalo again.

Here was a transformation scene that had taken place in a very few years before my very eyes, and in which I played a very prominent part from its first inception, and although only a drop in the bucket in a very small area of the Territories, yet the progress and advancement of civilization had been moved onward and upward even though it was only a wee, wee little notch. The thin end of the wedge had been inserted, so to speak, and all it required now was for those who arrived on the scene later, to drive it surely and steadily home for greater results.

Major McGibbon was Inspector of Agencies and paid us an annual visit. C. W. H. Saunders was head clerk at the Agency, and I completed many business transactions with him, as I now carried many Indian accounts on my books, which were entirely under the Agency jurisdiction.

Jim Sutherland and his asistant, Jim Pollock, did all the blacksmithing and engineering for the reserves, as well as the farm instructing on Little Child's reserve. Edward McNeil, John Nicol, and Jack Coburn were the other farm instructors, all good practical fellows. Sam Geddes, one of our old Qu'Appelle dog drivers, was the Agency interpreter and travelled round with the Agent when visiting the Indians and farm instructors in the different reserves. A great many of the hunters used to go away in the winter as usual, leaving their wives and families at home, to look after any live stock, pigs, or chickens which they might have. All had little houses now for wintering in, but they dearly loved to get out in their tents when the Spring came. My business had increased so appreciably I had to build a new warehouse to give more storage room. I also built myself a little house, office, and kitchen, and had a good cook by the name of David McDonald, an old H. B. C. man, so at last everything was very comfortable and business very good.

One summer, the Governor General, Lord Stanley, and his party visited us. They had a large escort of Mounted Police,

Governor Dewdney was also down to meet the Governor, as Indian Commissioner, and personally thanked me again for the good work which I had done for the Government at Crooked Lakes. Mr. McDonald had also come down from Qu'Appelle to meet the Governor General, and many other prominent men from the surrounding country and district. All the Indians were assembled at the Agency to meet him and greet him as the representative of their great mother, the Queen.

He made a long address to them and all others who were there assembled, from the verandah of the Agency, and made a great and favourable impression on his hearers. Of course the inevitable grub present had to be given to the Indians. Governor Dewdney asked me to see to it, and the Indian Department would pay the shot. The party and escort left for their train at Grenfel in the evening, after receiving three rousing cheers and a tiger from the biggest crowd that had ever gathered round the Agency up to that time.

That visit was a land mark for the Indians from which all other events dated either before or after, as so many years from the time that the Kitchie-okimah (Big Governor) visited us. They had all seen him and were full of joy and gladness.

A couple of years later the reserves presented a very favourable appearance in the progress of agriculture and stock raising. There was also a marked improvement in the dress of the Indians. Many of the children were attending school. Rev. Hugh McKay was doing very valuable work with his Industrial Boarding School at Round Lake; there were also a number of Indian children being sent to the Industrial School and Mission at Lebret, and everything was going fine. Many of the Indians had taken wheat to the mill, and brought back their own winter flour, others of them raising their own pork and beef, and making their own butter.

CHAPTER XV.

In 1889 Donald A. Smith (Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal), was appointed Governor of the Service. Chief Commissioner Wrigley had resigned, and C. C. Chipman, who was private secretary to Sir Charles Tupper when he was High Commissioner for Canada in England, was appointed Chief Commissioner in his stead. This was very disappointing to many of the Chief Factors, who fully expected that one of themselves would receive this appointment. Be that as it may, Chief Commissioner Chipman's appointment was confirmed, and he held down the job for about nineteen years. During, prior, and for a few years subsequent, a regular re-organization was being inaugurated throughout the whole service, which envolved the transferring of many of the men and officers to other charges, as well as the enlarging of Districts, by the merging of several small ones into one large District under one management. This was evidently necessary as there were no more Commissions being granted. Swan River District was not immune, and also had its turn over amongst the rest. Chief Factor William Clark was called in to the head office, and Manitoba District was attached to and came under the charge of Chief Factor Archibald McDonald. His whole District now being known under the name of "Manitoba District", this giving him an additional charge of seven extra posts to supervise and look after. Drever had put in a winter at Nut Lake, during the rebellion, where there were another bunch of turbulent Indians, to be held down, and had very much the same experience as I had gone through. He was afterwards transferred to the charge of Green Lake Post, in Saskatchewan District. Iredale, Poulin and M. S. Beeston had each their turn in being in charge of the Qu'Appelle saleshop, after Drever was transferred.

Adam McBeath retired from Fort Pelly and W. C. King, from Athabasca, was appointed in his place. David Armit

was transferred from Riding Mountain to Shoal Lake and shortly afterwards was again transferred to the charge of Manitoba House, practically to supervise the seven added Posts. M. S. Beeston was transferred to the charge of Shoal Lake, and I was transferred to the charge of Russell. Mr. Hart from the north, a brother of Professor Hart, being appointed to the charge of Crooked Lakes. John Anderson, whom I relieved at Russell, was apointed to the charge of the Fort Qu'Appelle Saleshop. There were also several transfers among the men in the Manitoba end of the District as well. Mr. John Calder shortly after this was transferred to the head office in Winnipeg, where he still remains as Chief Accountant, having now given the Company forty-four years' service, and still going strong.

Here was a great scatteration, a breaking up of family ties so to speak, but new environment and greater responsibilities were a good antidote to spur us all on to greater exertions in the Company's intrests, and give us a wider and more comprehensive view of the general trade and its many aspects.

Russell being the new name for the old "Shell River Post", was now a village of about two hundred, in the centre of a large farming district and fairly well settled all round. The settlers were mostly from Huron and Bruce counties, although there was a good percentage of English families as well.

Having taken over the charge of the Post from Mr. Anderson, I was now at liberty to have a look about and see where I was at. In the village there were two other general stores, a blacksmith shop, wheel wright shop, hotel, two churches, a school, an implement warehouse, and all the other pedimenta that constituted the making of a village in the early days. The place had not yet attained to the prominence of any sidewalks, and was rather difficult to get about in after a snow storm as the soil was a deep loam on a clay subsoil and churned up most beautifully in wet weather as

the streets were plowed up and partly graded with a view of topping off with gravel that summer.

The stores had a platform in front of each entrance, which we linked up with some boards over the intervening spaces. This was the beginning of the sidewalks in Russell; the labour was all gratis.

The village had a weekly train service, a branch line twelve miles long, from the main line of the Manitoba and North-Western railway, starting from Binscarth, due south of us. The original townsite belonged to Major Boulton of the famous Boulton scouts of the '85 rebellion, but he had disposed of the part of it to the Hudson's Bay Company, and about the first business I did was to sell some town lots, as the village anticipated a boom, as this was the best year the farmers had seen for some years past. There had been hard years all over this settlement, as well as other parts of the country, occasioned by drought and summer frosts, the only money in circulation being what was obtained by the sale of three old steers every fall. Of these nearly every farmer had a few to dispose of each year, the price being about forty dollars each. The necessaries for the homes were produced by bartering their butter and eggs in the village, and I must in justice say, that the women folks were the great immediate support of the family in those days, although the men worked hard on the homesteads, trying to raise crops, but to little purpose, the summer frosts beating them out, and in many cases could not raise enough good wheat to keep the chickens laying. There were also a number of Englishmen in the settlement, who regularly received remittances from the old country, and spent it freely, which helped to circulate considerable wealth and assisted along wonderfully. So by one means and another the people had lived and come through the past unprofitable and very unproductive years, in which they had almost given up trying to raise grain, and were turning their attention more to stock raising, creamery and

butter factories, which started the prosperity of the settlement and the village. In a few years summer frosts were very uncommon and wheat growing was again in full swing, and for a long period following farmers raised the best No. 1 Hard, and most of them became prosperous and wealthy. The village likewise became an active trading and marketing place with a very much increased urban and rural population of contented well-to-do people.

The nearest Indian reserve was about thirty miles distant at Lizard Point. Another reserve was on the Valley River, and the Gamblers reserve lay near Fort Ellice. There were only a few families on each reserve. I visited the reserves with some goods generally at Treaty time, but their trade did not amount to much. There were really no Indians at all attached to the Russell Post. It was almost exclusively white trade, for the most part old Hudson's Bay men, retired servants, among whom was Allan McIvor and his family, Edward Field and his family, and some of more recent years, who had taken up homesteads.

Dr. Barnardo's Home for Boys was within three miles of the village, under the very able management of E. A. Struthers, who utilized a large tract of land for mixed farming, and the training of these boys, who were sent out from England by the Doctor, in annual bunches, to receive their training and make Canadian citizens.

M. S. Beeston, who was in charge at Shoal Lake, used to pay me a visit sometimes. Mr. Calder, who had been down to Fort Ellice on Company's business, also took a drive over to visit me. W. C. King had retired from Fort Pelly, and Angus McBeath, from Touchwood Hills, was appointed in his place, while B. F. Cooper was given charge of Touchwood Hills, and M. S. Beeston was transferred to the charge of Fort William Saleshop. George Drever was transferred to Fort Chippewyan in Athabasca District.

I had been at Russell for six years and a great many changes for the better had taken place in the settlement, as well as in and around the village. We had now a daily train, other things had also progressed in keeping and accordance with other parts of the country. I had many personal friends, both in the country and in the town, to which status and standing our village had now arrived. There were many social and dancing parties throughout the settlement as well as in town. I attended many of these functions, at the same time visiting and calling upon many of our customers whom we were sure to meet at these festive gatherings. It was in the Boulton settlement that I found my future wife, Miss Annie Smith, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Smith, one of the most highly respected families in the District, whom I had the pleasure of becoming acquainted with shortly after my arrival in Russell.

Miss Smith had consented to change her name for mine, we had the consent of her father and mother, and all others concerned, and remained engaged for nearly a year before we were married. I had also to get the consent of the Commissioner and officer in charge of the District, which then entitled her to the same privileges of the Officers' Mess as I myself had. Without the consent of the Company I would have to pay for her board. That consent was forthcoming with congratulations and we were married in her parents' home on the old homestead, on the 19th day of October, 1892, and we have shared each other's joys and sorrows ever since. She has been a real helpmate in deed as well as in word, a noble woman, a loving and affectionate mother, my greatest asset and best beloved. We have been happy with each other through life and hope to be with each other and our family of one son and four daughters for many years to come.

Two years after our wedding I was once more transferred to the charge of Touchwood Hills Post, where we spent the next thirteen years. My wife was indeed brave to leave father,

mother, sisters, and brothers, and girlhood friends, and strike out west with me to a part of the country unknown to her where return visits would be few and far between. But she bravely brushed aside all other considerations and said where I went she was ready and willing to go also. We had many presents from all our friends, as well as a most elaborate and illuminated address and banquet from the Masonic fraternity and St. Andrew society.

CHAPTER XVI.

Early in December, 1895, my wife and I and our baby girl about a year old, boarded the train at Russell for Portage La Prairie, thence to Broadview, where we drove out to the Agency and paid a visit to Col. McDonald and his family, Jim Sutherland, Mrs. Sutherland and their children, Duncan and Mrs. Pierce, who were all glad to see us. We took train at Broadview in the evening again for Qu'Appelle station, thence mail stage to Fort Qu'Appelle, where we were well received by the Boss and his family. Mr. McDonald had met Mrs. McKenzie before when he was on one of his inspection trips to Russell, and had been entertained at our Mess, so we were now really at home again. We had a long journey. Mrs. McKenzie and baby were both tired, so the Boss made us rest for a day before proceeding fifty miles farther North by democrat to Touchwood Hills; besides, he had many things to talk to me about in respect to the business.

John Archie was at home, and he said he would drive us up to Touchwood Hills the following day or whenever we were ready to start. The Boss had a splendid team, and a swell rig which he placed at our disposal. Anything heavier than our hand baggage would be forwarded with the freighters in a few days. We had a splendid trip, John Archie telling us all the news. I had not seen him for over five years and we really all enjoyed the drive very much, having our lunch when about half way to our destination. We arrived shortly after sundown and B. F. Cooper and his butler, Charlie Brown, were there to receive us, and put away and look after the team which had brought us through so comfortably. We were in time to partake of a good hot roast of beef and vegetables, and hot tea or coffee, to which we all did justice. We were all tired after the long drive, the baby was a little irritable in her new surroundings after being wrapped up in a bundle all day, so we all retired thankful to be at the end of our

journey, and in such comfortable quarters where we would be fully settled before Christmas.

I was not a stranger at Touchwood Hills House and Post, as I had been up from Crooked Lakes once to assist Mr. Angus McBeath with the Treaty payments, and had gone around all the reserves with him, and had seen all, and knew quite a number of the Indians as well as most of the half-breeds who were settled in the Touchwood District, as well as some of the white ranchers and farmers round Kutawa and the Round Plain. I knew the geography of all that country well.

Mrs. McKenzie took over the charge of the house and Mess with as much confidence and ability as if she was in her father's and mother's house in the County of Boulton, and ably and hospitably presided over it for the next thirteen years at Touchwood Hills Post, the baby, now standing up by a chair or rolling on the carpet amusing herself, when she was not otherwise attracting the attention of either myself or her mother.

John Archie, after spending a day with us, returned to Fort Qu'Appelle. As we had to take Inventory before the transfer was made, Mr. Cooper had to remain a few days after, when he proceeded to Fort Qu'Appelle, thence to Fort Alexander on Lake Winnipeg, where he was transferred.

The Post Office was in the store, where we received a weekly mail by stage. My private office was in the dwelling house. The store and warehouse was well equipped, most of the supplies for the winter being then in stock and as yet being unopened, pending my arrival, which made stock taking much easier and quicker.

There were only a little over half the Indians here that were at Crooked Lakes. The four reserves here are not in one block, Miscowequan's and Day Bird's being in the Little Touchwood Hills, and Poorman's and Day Star's in the Big Touchwood. Miscowequan's was the nearest to the Post and had the largest population of the four. The Indian Agency,

telegraph and post office was at Kutawa, six miles west of us, and W. A. Heubach's store three miles farther up the road. Joseph Hollis' ranch was six miles away in another direction, so there was no danger of the neighbours quarrelling from each other's door steps anyway. There were a few half-breeds settled quite near the Post who themselves or their fathers had been Company's servants, among these being James Slater, Tom Folster, Peter Brown, Charlie McNab, and many others, all fine people and good obliging neighbours.

There was a Roman Catholic Mission and Indian Boarding School on Miscowequan's reserve, and English Mission and Boarding School on Day Bird's reserve, and a day school on Poorman's and Day Star's, all under Government supervision. There was also a farm instructor on each reserve. The system here was much the same as that at Crooked Lakes. Cattle and grain raising were very well advanced and the quality of the cattle very much improved by the importation of pure bred bulls. The majority of the Indians were doing well, and a large number of steers were disposed of annually. Quite a number of the Indians still continued hunting in the winter, it being a good district for furs of all kinds, which were still fairly plentiful, especially in the Spring. For several years muskrats were very numerous and their skins came in very handy for the purchasing of supplies before farming operations began.

There were always plenty of customers at the store, and a good profitable business was being done. The settlers and ranchers in the locality generally came in once a week for their mail and gave us a busy day in the store, as well as in the house, as many of them coming long distances stayed with us for lunch and we were always glad to see them. Many of them did not see a soul from one week's end to another, except when they had a look at themselves in their mirror, so we were never short of company of one kind or other at the Post, and plenty of passers-by in the summer time, tra-

velling east and west, who invariably stopped at the store to replenish their wants, and ask how far it was to the next town. A great many of these were land seekers who had only recently arrived in the country, and expected a town about every ten miles or so. It was principally a half-breed settlement for many miles round interspersed with horse and cattle ranches. It being a good hay country, many of the half-breeds made a fairly good living out of their gardens and wintering steers for outsiders at five dollars per head for the winter. They also did quite a bit of freighting in the summer time.

They were all good sports and nearly every one had one or two race horses. The 24th of May was a real holiday, and the greater part of the Spring was spent in fitting up horses for the races. There was a regular derby for three-year-olds raised in the District, and there were some good ones. We had for many years from eight to ten entries for this race alone, which was always the principal race of the day. Some of the other races were open to outsiders, and many good Eastern and Western horses competed for prizes from year to year on our race track. Nearly every one who had a horse that could canter at all entered him in the local races. The races were clean; every horse ran for blood, and the best won. It was good sport every year, and the Touchwood Hills races were the most popular in the country. We always had a big crowd. Some years nearly all the people from Fort Qu'Appelle and Qu'Appelle station would come up, some from Regina, Brandon, Winnipeg, together with the settlers from all the surrounding country. The Indians would be at the race track. It was always a great time, and sometimes the day would run into the greater part of a week. It was the great season of the year, for young and old to renew acquaintanceship, and have a pool on every race. It was the great meeting place for many years and many of the old-timers enjoyed it to the limit.

There were also foot races, Indian and Squaw races, and many of the Caledonian games were also patronized. No one failed to get to the Touchwood races who lived at all within reasonable distance.

Sunday school picnics also once or twice during the summer, provided lots of fun for the youngsters. Swings, foot races, and dancing platforms were some of the attractions, and the young good looking fellow, with a rubber tire covered buggy was always sure of a passenger, while the democrat would whirl along the smaller kids and the old folks, back to the homestead to talk over their early picnic days in old Ontario, or perhaps a romance among the Maples before the days of rubber tire buggies. And some of the old country people would whisper of spots in the old land where Cupid had found an easy mark, which culminated in the grand prize of their lives. Perhaps it was another scene of some old bachelor homesteader mounting his old horse, and riding away towards his old shack in lonely security, having taken in the scene at the picnic, but yet unmoved. He had seen no Cupid, and slowly went to slumber and started to snore. He was also happy. An awful difference in some people, eh?

The whole picnic scene passed before him in his dreams, he wakened up with a start, little Cupid had shot an arrow at him. He was mortally wounded. He got up and dressed, cooked another indigestible meal, looked at it, and then gave it to the dog, cleared away his cup and plate to be washed up at some future time, got his pen, ink and paper, and forthwith ordered a rubber tired, covered buggy from the manufacturers.

I had a splendid flower and vegetable garden at the Post every year. We grew all our own vegetables and owned our own cows, and driving horses. This was the best Post I ever lived at or ever saw before or after in all my travels. Wild ducks of all kinds and prairie chicken were plentiful. I was very fond of shooting and kept our larder well stocked with

wild fowl all the time. Late in the fall I always put on an extra spurt and put enough up to last us during the winter. We also got some geese, swans, and sand hill cranes. We killed our own winter beef which ran on the prairie all summer, and was fattened up for this purpose. We always had a good Mess. Living was cheap and of the very best quality. It only required attention at the proper seasons of the year to have everything necessary for comfort. Our nearest Doctor was fifty miles away. He generally made a trip once a month for the Indian Department to visit the Indians. If any one wished to be sick they had to time themselves to fit in with his visits, otherwise there was no Doctor except Epsom salts, castor oil and senna leaves as remedies. A special trip of the Doctor cost anywhere from fifty to a hundred dollars, and many of the people who sometimes got sick were not able to afford so much. Fortunately, however, sickness was the exception save in natural cases which could be provided for beforehand, but at the best the lack of a resident Doctor was a serious handicap in many cases of critical emergency.

Old Pascal, an Indian Doctor, very often rendered valuable service among the Indians, they preferring him to a whtie doctor, whose medicine they would very often destroy. Old Pascal was a great medicine man and got credit for having made many wonderful cures. Later we had a resident Doctor who did a good business, as people seemed to be more frequently sick than before. Such is the perversity of human nature. The people as a whole attended their several denominational Missions and Churches with great regularity on Sundays and Church holidays. There were also many gatherings among the people, and dances were frequent and well attended, especially during the winter months when sleighing was good. You did not think twice about driving fifteen or twenty miles to a dance with bells jingling and sleighs loaded with boys and girls having a good time. The world was ahead of them,

as it had been with others before their time. It was a case of, "On with the dance, let joy be unconfined."

James Slater was my chief assistant in the store and Post Office, a first class Indian trader and a good, steady, reliable man in every way. I knew that everything was all right as long as he was in the store. I had to be outside a good deal myself working up new business for the store, and seeing to many other things. George W. Denholm was transferred from Manitoba House to the charge of Nut Lake Post, about one hundred miles north of us, and in the extreme North-west end of the district. The Boss found that he could not afford the time to give this Post the attention in the way of inspections that it should have, his district being so large it took up much of his time to visit all the Posts once or twice a year, so he put Nut Lake under my supervision. This would save him fully four hundred miles of travel annually. I generally made two trips a year to it for several years. It was a good fur post and well worth the extra trouble. Denholm had Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Isbister as his housekeeper and general assistant. Denholm and I were great friends, and always made a good trade at the Post, and he always said he liked to work under my instructions as he could make things go on so much better. He would come into Touchwood in the spring with his accounts and returns, and then go to Qu'Appelle for a couple of weeks or so, more as a holiday than anything else, although he would always pick up a lot of new things for the trade of his Post, outside of his regular outfit.

I would generally go out with him, to give him a hand at Treaty time, and bring his cash back.

The Indian agent from Touchwood always paid the Fishing Lake and Nut Lake Indians their Treaty money sometime after all the Touchwood payments were over, which made it pretty late in the fall for the Nut Lakers, but was really the best time to pay them, so that they could properly outfit themselves, and then start immediately on their winter hunt, as

no attempt had yet been made to make farmers out of them. They were still in their wild, primitive, savage condition, a band of healthy stalwart Saulteaux who lived and hunted chiefly in the bush and were a law unto themselves. Their chief's name at that time was "Yellow Quill."

Denholm lived and traded among them for several years with great success and made a very profitable trade for the Company. He got tired at last, resigned, and took up a homestead near the Touchwood Hills Post, where I saw a good deal of him. He worked on his homestead for five or six years, but being still a bachelor it was an uphill job. He eventually sold his farm and went back to the Midlothians of Scotland near Mussellborough to assist his youngest sister in the management of the large farm on which he was born. He did not return to Canada again, and last I heard from him he was doing well.

The Boss used to make frequent trips to Touchwood. It was only a fifty mile drive for him, and he could always count on a couple of days' rest, a good bed, clean room, and a cup of good strong tea before he got up in the morning. He knew all the old Indians personally, having been in charge of the Touchwood Post when he was a young clerk in the service. The Post was located then about fifteen miles North-west at the edge of the great salt plain as it was called, and now the most productive wheat fields in the world. He liked to talk with them about the times round Touchwood long ago.

There were also many old Hudson's Bay people who never failed to come to the Post to pay their respects when they heard he was there. Many of them had been to York on the boat trips, when they were young men, freighted, canoed, ran buffalo and had many narrow escapes on the rivers and lakes. Indian tribal wars, and such like were always the chief topics of conversation and of these they never tired. Also many of the old ladies who no doubt were young girls when he was clerk in charge would come and see him, having

their own little tales of long ago, and the dances they used to have. Evidently the Boss used to be a great dancer in his young days as well as the rest of them. They would talk of the Jig, the Duckdance, the reel of eight, the Haymakers, the Kissing dance, and many others, the names of which have no significance to present day dances, but they still have a warm corner in the hearts of the old timers who have long since abandoned the modern dance hall.

One day in the store one of the Boss's old lady friends said to him: "Mr. McDonald, I want you to give me five dollars."

He said: "I have nothing but Hudson's Bay Company's money."

"Oh, dear me," she said, "have you no money of your own? You surely have saved five dollars, you have been such a long time in the service, I don't want to believe you at last, you must have a little money of your own anyway, and I want you to give it to me, as I want to make a dance for you, before you go gack again to Kay-pell. I might never see you again. I'm getting ould, and yourself is ould too. Come give me, you never used to be stingy with your own money, and I will spend it right away so that the Company will have all your money too; they got mine long ago."

The Boss had to dig down, and handed her a five dollar bill which she immediately planked on the counter, and got its value in tea, sugar, tobacco, raisins, currants and rice, and some other things.

The old lady had won out, and started for her home with a good supply of groceries. The Boss thought it was a good joke on him, and told it to Mrs. McKenzie several times that evening. It got to be a regular bye word, and we would frequently ask some of our friends, "If they really had no money of their own?"

Mr. McDonald left for Qu'Appelle the following day, having greatly enjoyed his official inspection visit, and I

heard nothing more of the dance that the old lady was going to make for him, out of the proceeds of that money of his own.

The second and last issue of scrip was given out to the Qu'Appelle and Touchwood half-breeds, to all those who had not participated in the first issue, also their children who were born prior to 1885. This was the complete ruination of most of the half-breeds in that part of the country. They were poor before, but within two years afterwards many of them were in abject poverty. They seemed to have completely lost their heads. They spent their money like water, and a great deal of it went in fire water which completed the ruin. They would listen to no one. They were bound to sell their own as well as their children's scrip and blow in the proceeds as quickly as possible. Money was as plentiful as hay for a while, and then came the relapse, and nothing more in sight. It was general among them all, drinking, dancing, dressing in fine clothes, and hunting for more pleasure as long as they had a dollar left. I remember one day, a man and his wife drove up to the store in a brand new rubber tired buggy, with a spanking team, and new silver mounted harness with whip to match, both dressed to kill in silks and overcoats, embroidered lap rugs, gold chains and watches, hats and gloves of the very latest style and best quality. I knew them very well, and also what their circumstances were a few weeks before. I expect I looked rather foolish at the unusual sight, anyway they asked if there was any mail for them. I said no, so they got out of the buggy, tied up the horses, walked into the store. The rustle of the lady's new silk dress and underskirts was most wonderful. It was in the days of wide brimmed ladies' hats, and here was some wide brim. She could scarcely get in the store door with it on. I went round the counter to serve them myself, and they began to buy in quantity all kinds of things that I knew was of no use to them at all. I saw that both their heads were so swollen about

their own importance that I let them go to it. I could stand it if they could. After they were through buying I was having a talk with them. They were both uneducated. I was telling them it was very foolish for them to buy all this stuff which they did not require. Their old buggy and harness was quite good enough for a year or two yet, and lots of the other things that they had told me they had bought at Qu'Appelle. I said, "You could have done very well without, and put your money in the Bank, so that you could use it when you really required something." I saw that the woman did not like my line of argument or advice, and she turned round on me in a rage, her eyes like balls of fire. They had something in their grip that they had been tampering with, which caused all the flushes and sparkles. She said, "You white people don't know anything but put your money in a bank, while hus, we use it, our money, we know what we are doing, and have plenty to do it with." I said nothing but wished them good-bye and raised my hat, as by that time they were both in their swell buggy again, along with their shopping parcels, and their team was headed for home again.

Two years later they had not a single thing; they had to dispose of all this fine stuff at a sacrifice to get enough grub to eat. That is one example of how they came to poverty.

Here is another example: The half-breed who was head of the house died. He had been a very careful man, and with the proceeds of his scrip had left his wife and family very well to do. He left them seventy-eight head of cattle, eight teams of horses, wagons and harness, and a complete buggy, driving and saddle horses, a good house, and one quarter section of good land, together with all necessary furniture and furnishings, etc. His widow got the spending bug and in two years she did not have enough to clink on a tombstone. She danced it away, made presents, made Indian feasts, and in the end married the most miserable Indian on the reserves. I said to her one day after she was down and out, "You are

happy now, are you not?'' She said, ''Oh dear, yes, I have nothing now to bother my head to keep, and can go anywhere I like on foot, nothing to look after.''

There were many other similar cases. They all seemed to lose their heads, and that is the reason I have said that the last scrip issued instead of being a benefit as the Government intended it to be, was the complete ruination of the bulk of the half-breed population, both morally, financially, and otherwise. So you cannot always, sometimes, tell what is best to be done.

CHAPTER XVII.

One afternoon in the fall of the year, the Boss and his driver arrived at the Post. He was going to Fort Pelly by way of Fishing Lake, and as he had not been at Nut Lake for several years he thought he would go round that way, if I could make it convenient to go out with him, and we could discuss the different matters of recent correspondence which had principally to do with Nut Lake Post affairs. The following afternoon, we started, his man driving my team behind. Everything was dry, and the roads were good. We camped at Fishing Lake that night, and reached Nut Lake the following evening about sundown. We had a very interesting and valuable conversation on the trip, about Touchwood and Nut Lake business, as well as other Posts in the District. He told me that Mr. Armit was being transferred to the charge of Fort Albany in James Bay, and that Angus McBeath was retiring from the Service at Fort Pelly, in fact that was his special business on this trip, to try to induce him to stay on for another year, or until such time as a suitable successor could be found. He said, "If your brother was not trading in opposition to the Company at Pelly it would be just the Post for you, but I would not think of asking you to go there under those conditions, unless you wished to go yourself." I said, "That is settled right here, Mr. McDonald, brother or no brother, I'm not looking for Irish promotion and I would not in any case take charge of Pelly. If there is nothing better I'm quite satisfied to remain at Touchwood Hills as you know it is the best paying Post in your District today, and I have worked up enough Posts to a paying basis, during my twenty-nine years' service, and besides, I will be eligible for retirement on pension next year. So if there is nothing better than Touchwood Hills to offer me, I don't want any other Post, and I am very much obliged to you in not asking me to go to Pelly, and your reasons for not doing so."

We were speaking very friendly as man to man, although I was then receiving two hundred pounds per annum, together with board and lodging, in accordance with the custom of the Company's service, for myself and family, yet I felt that I was being held too long in the same District where there was no chance of any further advancement or promotion. I was the only man in his District now, who was of the old time originals, but for some reason or other he did not want to let me get out of his District. He told me I was too useful a man in the District, and he did not want to part with me, although the Commissioner had asked him to several times, but he had never consented. He said, "I know it was selfish, as many years ago you had nothing further to learn about all the details of the Company's affairs from the bottom to the top, and you have always made good in any position I have placed you. I have the greatest confidence in you and your ability, that is the only excuse I have for holding on to you from year to year. You have served the Company well, and besides you are a young man yet as far as your age is concerned, and you are ripe in the all round knowledge of the Company's business." He said, "Don't put in your resignation. You are good for twelve or fifteen years' service yet when you will get full pension, which the Board will not allow you at your present age. I cannot offer you anything better than you have at present, and changes may take place in a year or two that are not apparent at present. You are now the highest paid Post manager in the District."

I had never asked for an increase in salary during my service, and as far as salary was concerned in those days, I was getting a good salary, and held a good position, being practically my own Boss and all the rest of it.

I told him I would continue to serve as usual for a time, but I positively objected to taking charge of any other Post in the District, so that part of our conversation was ended, and neither he nor I referred to the subject again, but took

up other matters of business in connection with the trade and winter equipment. He was quite pleased with the general condition of Nut Lake, and noticed many changes and improvements since he last visited the Post. I had some new buildings put up during the past few years, and had also changed the site of the Post to a more favourable location, all of which he was, of course, conversant with through my reports, but had not seen it before. In fact he was surprised to see so much improvement at so little cost, as appeared in the annual accounts. He also noticed along the trail two or three bridges, that I had built over bad creeks, which made travelling and freighting much easier. I built three bridges myself, with the help of my freighters, and it really cost the Company nothing. The timber was handy, and I had built lots of bridges, in fact I never went over a bad creek twice without putting a bridge across it, if it was in my line of freighting travel. It paid. There were more goods damaged in trying to ford creeks that were just a foot too deep, than in any other way. The freighters used to say when I would start out with them on a trip, "We sure will have to build a bridge this trip, he is coming with us, so we better have our axes sharp or there will be hell to pay. We have to hurry up when he says, only stop to eat when the bridge is finished and all the carts pass over it."

Well, anyway, I built lots of them, and built them in a hurry, too, sometimes. They always served the purpose—and we did not have wet or damaged goods when they reached their destination, and that more than paid for the time it took to slap a few sticks over a creek. I have always found prevention to be better than cure, where at all practicable.

Returning from Nut Lake, we camped at Duck Hunting Creek, about fifteen miles out. There was good feed and water here for the horses, and we had shot some ducks and prairie chickens, with which we made a fine supper and

breakfast next morning. The weather was superb. No flies or mosquitoes, and we were enjoying the trip to the fullest. There was nothing to worry about as far as I was concerned. Everything at Touchwood and Nut Lake was in first class shape, and in a prosperous condition, and there were the very best of prospects for the coming winter trade. The Boss was highly satisfied with both Posts, it was the first time I ever knew him not to find fault with something or other. Of course it was his business to find faults if there were any lying round, and to have them rectified. He was very keen on the thorough inspection of his posts, and he had the peculiar habit of poking into every hole and corner. He had been so long in charge of the District that every phase of the game was as familiar to him as his own bedroom, and he did not go to tell someone else about your shortcomings. You got it in the neck right there and then, red hot, and it was all over. He always told a man or manager where he got off at, and what he was expected to do, and yet with all this, he was very kind hearted and would do anything in reason to help a fellow along. I had served so long under him that I knew every twist of his body and mind, and I suppose my own character had become more or less moulded like his through our long association in business. He very often asked my advice on various business matters within the district, things that I had spent years in learning, and given every thought too in my own experience, and knew to a mathematical demonstration, what results would necessarily follow doing a thing in a certain way, at a certain time, and profitable results were the thing the Company was looking for. To this end I had spent my life so far in constant study for their interests, not considering salary or time whether by day or night if their interests demanded more energy or exertion on my part to accomplish any legitimate purpose.

At the forks of the road near Fishing Lake we boiled the kettle and had lunch. We parted here. I took my own

team and buggy and headed south for Touchwood, and he and his man continued on east for Fort Pelly.

I had not driven many miles when all about me ashes began to fall in flakes like a snow shower. The wind was blowing hard, an undoubted sign that a big prairie fire was in action. Coming on to a ridge I could see smoke in the distance, in the direction of Touchwood. Prairie fires were quite common in the fall, and as a rule we did not give them any particular attention, but this fall everything was dried up and the grass was unusually long everywhere on account of the heavy rains in the early part of the season. As I drove towards it I could see that the fire was very extensive, the whole country seemed to be in flames, and the fire was travelling with great rapidity with an increasing gale blowing. The heat was getting intense. The whole atmosphere seemed to be on fire. Smoke had gotten so dense that the sun was completely obscured. Bundles of grass all aflame carried by the fierce wind were falling all around me, and the wind was nearly as hot as a furnace blast. I came on to another small ridge, driving as fast as the horses could go, the poor beasts were now in a lather of foam and sweat. I could see the flames and hear their roar. I was entirely surrounded by fire, and at very close quarters from this particular one, right in front of me. The horses were frightened and so was I, but there was no time to lose if I was to save them and myself. The fire was travelling at the rate of fifteen to twenty-five miles an hour and where the grass was very long in dry sloughs it was making much faster time. I jumped out and set fire to the grass in my immediate vicinity and got the team and myself on the burnt ground. By this time the smoke was nearly suffocating us. I got in front of my team, put my blanket over their heads, and got my own head in with theirs and kept most of the smoke out of our lungs, otherwise we should have perished. It was one of the worst prairie fires, and the closest call I had ever experienced.

That arm of the fire passed us with a roar, licking up everything in its path. There was no more danger of being burned to death but the intense heat still in the air was hard to endure, and the team was very restless when I took the blanket off our heads. The smoke had partially gone to leeward, and here the team and I stood alone on a ridge in the midst of a black burned wilderness, that had been so beautiful a few hours before, with the grasses and flowers waving and rejoicing in their most beautiful autumn tints.

Water was what myself and the horses wanted now, but I knew there was none within three or four miles of us, and then it was only a small spring, which I might not be able to find, as it was some distance off the trail, and the fire had altered the appearance of the whole face of the country.

The fire that I had just come through had started in the great salt plain, between the big Touchwood and Humboldt, sweeping right through the Quill plain over which I was then travelling. There were numerous other fires to the east and south of me as I could see by the smoke, and this section I had still to pass through. I was also very anxious about my family at the Post as I could see heavy smoke in that direction and I was still about twenty-five miles from home.

All this had taken place in a much less time than it has taken me to write it down, although it appeared hours to me at the time.

Water was what we now wanted, and we wanted it badly. The horses were quite badly singed about the head and breasts, and I had parted with my own eyebrows and eyelashes, and was blistered a little on the face and hands.

I pulled on to the trail again, the horses were not feeling very gay so I let them walk along slowly for a mile or so, and then started them on a slow trot, but gave them their heads, did not tighten the reins at all, as I was in hopes they would fork off, when we came near where the spring should

be, as I was sure it was still ahead of us. All land marks had been obliterated by the fire.

We had gone quite a distance, but not nearly as far as I had thought, and I was beginning to despair, when all at once the team left the trail. I said nothing to them, but let them go their own way. I knew there was a little clump of bushes where the spring was, but I could see nothing as far as I could look ahead but burnt prairie. However, I let them go, as they seemed willing and were increasing their pace in a straight bee line for some place. I looked back and could see the buggy track as straight as a line behind us. In a few minutes I saw a few red foxes ahead of us, and some badgers and skunks, that had come through the fire; some of them were pretty well scorched, in fact their pelts would be useless for that season, and many of them would not live through the winter. Foxes that were burned like these were we called "Samsons", and were useless.

All this passed through my mind in an instant, when a couple of black tail deer bounced past within twenty yards of us. They had also been through the fire, and were badly singed. They disappeared over a ridge a short distance ahead. I was so thirsty by this time that I could only speak to my team with difficulty. The team started to trot as the deer passed us and just over the ridge lay the spring with a lot of these crippled and burned wild animals standing and lying near it. The poor things did not seem at all frightened at our arrival and just watched us from a short distance. We were all pilgrims in distress. I unhitched the team but allowed them only a few mouthfuls of water and took very little myself. After a little while I gave the horses all they would drink and also drank as much as I wanted myself.

I hitched up again and started in a diagonal course until I struck the trail. I saw several foxes and prairie wolves heading for the spring. It seemed to be the only water in that part of the country at that time, and was surely a

blessing to the wild animals in that vicinity. It was certainly the most precious sight that I had seen in years. I took my tea kettle full of it in the rig with me, and took a sip of it now and again.

The wind had changed and the fires were now travelling in all directions, but towards evening it was not blowing so hard, though still very hot. The fire had crossed the trail in many places, and I had to drive through it, both the horses and myself being pretty well scorched several times. Towards sundown my team got completely played out. They could not even go at a slow walk. I unhitched them, took their harness off and rubbed them all over. There was nothing for them to eat, so we had to try it again after half an hour's rest. I saw that the fire was in round the Post but it was not the same fire that I had been in all day, it had come upon them from the east. The fires all around looked much worse as it began to get dark. I was about three miles from the Post and had now to go through fire all the way. I was sure from the look of things that the Post and everything else was burned, as I could see nothing but fire in all the bluffs round where the Post was. I don't know how the horses or myself made the last mile and a half, but when I got there the Post was still standing, although everything was burned right up to the buildings.

My family were all safe and so was Jamie Slater. The fire had jumped the fire guards round the Post many times, but they had been able to combat it from the buildings and stables. They had been fighting it from about noon. Mrs. McKenzie had gathered all the Indians from the reserve who could come to help, and they had certainly all worked like niggers. The fire was still being watched, but all the burning was going on outside the plowed fireguards now. They had taken a lot of the furniture out of the house, and piled it up in the garden, the youngest baby in the cradle among the pile. Mrs. McKenzie was a sight to behold. She had been out

all day directing the Indians first at one point and then at another whenever the fire would jump the guards. She was certainly a tired woman, but had saved the Fort and her children with the aid of Slater and the Indians.

The fire in the bluffs burned for several days, and in many of the sloughs the earth was on fire and burned all winter. Several people lost their lives in some parts. Cattle and horses died from burns; many hay stacks were destroyed. Rabbits, prairie chicken and many of the smaller fur bearing animals were burned. It was the most disastrous all over prairie fire that had been in the country during my time.

The following winter was a hard long one, many ranchers were put out of business, losing all their cattle for lack of feed. Some others had lost all their stables and dwellings through the fire and were penniless, having invested their all in ranch and stock which had all gone up in smoke, or the cattle starved to death before the following spring.

The Grand Trunk Pacific Railway was now under location, and many parties of surveyors and engineers were traversing the District. The line was finally located and ran about two miles south of the Post right through the Touchwood Hills, entering them at the eastern end through Miscowequan's Reserve.

I had a busy season at the Post supplying all these surveying parties, and their men, outside of all the regular trade of the Post. It gave the business of the Post a large volume of increase for the time. When the location of the line was finally confirmed, construction, grading and track laying was pushed forward with great rapidity. The Chief Engineer pitched his headquarters about three hundred yards from the Post in order to be central to all his resident engineers east and west, as well as to be near his source of supply and mail and telegraphic communication. The headquarters remained there until the road was completed, and passenger trains passing daily. The Government telegraph line from

Qu'Appelle to Battleford passed in front of the store door along the old trail, so all I had to do was to get permission to tap the wire, get an operator and an instrument and I had a telegraph office in operation in a day or two after the Engineer had decided to have his headquarters there during the period of construction.

Nearly everything was done by wire until we got more frequent mails. The operator was kept very busy, and the office paid well. There were all kinds of contractors and sub-contractors. Teams of mules and horses, scrapers, dump carts, camping outfits, and hundreds of men getting on to the work all the time. One gang being fired, another gang being hired, and a third gang on the trail. This kept things lively, and the time-keepers and paymasters had their usual railroad work cut out for them. The labourers were nearly all foreigners. The post office was also a busy spot. It took up the whole time of one clerk, and very often the store was open for business from 5 a. m. till after midnight and the house full of engineers and travellers. We scarcely ever sat down to a meal without three or four strangers being at table with us. Of course the most of them were new customers, giving me large orders for goods, and there was no other place round at which they could get a meal.

Mrs. McKenzie and what help she could get were worked off their feet, and very often she would give a hand in the post office as well. We were doing a big business, and I had a string of freighters continually on the road. It was no trouble to order goods, as I had the wire right in the store and during that two years I could sell the goods as fast as I could get them in. I sold the men clothing, boots, shirts, sox, etc., cheaper than the contractors would or could sell to them, and better quality stuff. So I had the whole business from postage stamps and cigarettes to anything that any man required, or could get it within forty-eight hours. It was

all cash transactions except contract supplies or the Resident Engineers.

There were all kinds of bums trying to work the oracle, but it was a poor country for their trade. I saw that as soon as construction was over and the engineers' camps moved away all the trade of the Post would go flat, at the present site. The settlers would all go to do their business at the different railway stations, so there was nothing for the Company to do but either build a new place at one of the stations, or close the Post up, and to make timely preparations with that end in view, I reported in full on the matter on all its bearings about six months before construction was finished, so that the Company would have ample time for consideration as to what would be done when the time arrived for final decision.

The tracklayer made its appearance in the fall and winter of 1907-8, and soon after it construction trains on skeleton track, and so westward ho, they passed along to the terminus at Prince Rupert. Settlers as usual kept following up, settling here and there in groups, colonies, and isolated homesteads. They were all kinds and conditions, mostly Europeans and foreigners of all kinds settled round Touchwood, many of them having worked on the railway during construction. They did not look good to me as prospective customers, they were hard to deal with and must have been cheated on every hand in the countries from which they came.

I had no intention of trying to adapt myself to their ways or catering for any trade they might have at a later date. I would ten times sooner have my Indians (pure Canadians) to deal with: they were Princes compared to the samples of foreigners that were being pushed up our way, that could be located at suitable points, where a good gerrymander would elect the next member to the legislature, naturalize them Yes, but to make Canadians out of them, Never. The whole country was overloaded with this class, and has, and

still is paying the penalty. If we are going to continue to make Canada a white man's country, then we have to cut out at once and forever, the importation of the off scourings of European and Asiatic nations, and each individual true Canadian and British subject go to work and develop our own nation with our own people, by our own people, for our own people.

We had four children now, three girls and a boy. We had decided to send the boy and one girl to school in Winnipeg, and had made all arrangements to get them in at the beginning of the term after New Year. So I obtained a week's leave of absence for this purpose, and immediately after New Year, 1909, Mrs. McKenzie, the two children, and myself, boarded a caboose attached to a G. T. P. construction train at the water tank, which was named Touchwood Station, and started for Winnipeg, going a considerable distance on a skeleton track. Without serious mishap, and many stops, we arrived and placed the two children in school.

I called at the Chief Commissioner's office the following forenoon just to pay my respects, as I was on leave of absence. To my great surprise I was told by the secretary that Chief Factor McDonald was in the office with Mr. Chipman, and he was instructed to admit me at once. After the usual salutations and a hearty handshake with a pat on the shoulder, I was invited to an armchair that stood vacant nearby. The Commissioner then asked me when I was going back to Touchwood. I told him we would start in a day or so after the children had gotten used to their surroundings. Mr. McDonald also asked very kindly after Mrs. McKenzie and the children, also who I had left in charge at Touchwood, and after a little further conversation the Commissioner said, "On your way back, could you go out to Manitoba House for a week or ten days? The gentleman in charge there is retiring, and his successor who is coming from the East has not arrived yet, and it is urgent that the other man gets away at once. Mr.

McDonald and I have talked the matter over, and both he and I would very much prefer if you could possibly go out there and take over the transfer of the Post and hand the same over to the new man on his arrival. I am very sorry to ask you to do this on a leave of absence trip, especially as you have Mrs. McKenzie with you, but it is really necessary for a responsible man to go out as I am not at all pleased with the monthly statements coming in from that Post."

I said, "Yes, I'll go, just as soon as you have my letter of instructions ready, but I must be back at Touchwood within ten days."

Next day I got off the train at Westbourne, got a team, and made my way north up the lake, arriving at Manitoba House the following day.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Mrs. McKenzie went back to Touchwood by G. T. P. a couple of days later. In a few days Mr. Chesterfield and I completed the Inventory, made out trading account and balance sheet, and made the transfer in due form, both of us signing up all the documents and certified correct. I sent a team out to the railway with Mr. Chesterfield, his baggage, and all the necessary papers, for the Commissioner as well as for Mr. McDonald at Fort Qu'Appelle. Everything was ready to be handed over to the incoming man, who would, I expected, arrive back with the team, whose driver I had instructed to wait until he got a reply to my telegram, which I instructed Chesterfield to despatch to the Commissioner on his arrival at the railway.

On the tenth day the team arrived, but no man to take charge. The driver brought back a letter from the Commissioner, also one from Mr. McDonald from Qu'Appelle, both of them informing me that the man from the East had taken sick on his way west and had gone into hospital at Fort William, and had died there. The letter informed me that the only available man that could be sent had to come from Cumberland House in Saskatchewan District, and every effort was being made to get him and his family through to Manitoba House as quickly as possible, in fact both letters said they expected he would be then about Hudson Bay Junction, on the C. N. R.

Here was a fine kettle of fish. My wife and two little children were at Touchwood over four hundred miles away, and expecting me back any day, and I knew that a man from Cumberland House could not reach me for many days. The mail arrived but once every two weeks, so I simply had to handle the business of the Post and wait. Letters from Mr. McDonald assured me that everything was going fine at Touchwood, that he had been up to the Post and had found

my Indians were paying up their accounts well. He informed me that Mrs. McKenzie and the children were well, and he hoped that I would soon be back. He could not understand why Mr. Taylor had not arrived before this.

There were quite a number of old H. B. C. servants, settled round the lake raising a few head of cattle and horses, and fishing. Some of them were fairly well to do, and others seemed to have a hard scratch to get along. A number of them after leaving the service and becoming freemen, had taken life a little too easy, and did not always keep the larder full. Their rations did not come in the house the same as they used to do, and they missed it many times during a long hard winter, still each man was his own boss, and rabbits, moose, and fish were fairly plentiful. Some of them came to the store every day, and I visited at most of their places. I knew a great many of them before, who had been at Fort Ellice and Qu'Appelle during my time there and had lots of stories to tell each other. They were all married and had large families, and were nearly all related to each other by marriage. They were contented and happy with life as it was round Manitoba and Winnipegosis Lakes. They were very anxious that I should stay in charge of the Post as they had not had a right Boss since Angus Brabant and Mr. Armit had left the Post.

Old Sandy McAuly, who used to be cattleman at Fort Ellice, had retired years before, but I hired him to work about the store. He lived quite close to the Post and had a family of over twenty to support, including his grandchildren and adopted children. He was nearly in his dotage then, and could hardly tell his own children from his grandchildren sometimes. Some of the children could speak Gaelic as well as Indian or French. They could all snare rabbits and catch fish as soon as they could walk.

Old Abraham Moar was postmaster. He was also the grandfather or great grandfather of every one in the settle-

ment. He was then over ninety years of age and died a few years later.

Stagville was the name of the village, and Rev. Alfred Cook was the curate of the English church and mission school. He used to be at Touchwood, and had only been down here a few years. He was well liked by his people, and was said to be making converts. They were all great church goers, and he always had a good sized congregation. He did not tire them out with long sermons or useless advice. His services were short and to the point, and he did not often bother about a collection till the hunters came back.

I was at Manitoba House three months before Mr. Taylor and his family arrived to take charge, the longest three months I had ever put in in the service. The Commissioner's letter had never reached Cumberland until March. It had missed the New Year mail, and there had been no travel between Hudson's Bay junction and there in the meantime. The snow was very deep, and were it not for the fact that they had to come out for a doctor, I might still be at Manitoba House, as far as the Commissioner's letter or telegram was concerned. At the end of March Mr. Taylor arrived late one night with his family and effects. I made the transfer of the post and put him in charge of it that same night. I wished him the best of luck, and started for Winnipeg next morning at daylight with one of the teams that had brought him in.

I had made a good trade during the time I was at the post. There was no one to blame particularly. Touchwood had not suffered and I was suitably rewarded later on for my fidelity to duty. Had the first man not taken sick and died things might have turned out different and there would have been no Manitoba House story of my three months sojourn there. I saw my children in Winnipeg and was glad to find that they were all right. I wired my wife at Touchwood then went to the Commissioner's office to hand in my report and proceed to Touchwood by first train.

The Commissioner said many nice things to me, among others that the Company had decided not to build at Touchwood at present, and would close up the post on the 31st of May, and that I must try to reduce the stock as much as possible, between now and then. Mr. McDonald would officially inform me of all details as soon as I got home. He would write him at once of the entire satisfaction I had given at Manitoba House and that I had started back to Touchwood.

The G. T. P. train started in the morning with me aboard. Arriving at Touchwood I found everything O.K., wife and children well, and Jamie Slater in the midst of the spring trade, which was good that year. Thousands of rat skins were piled up everywhere, a good opportunity to reduce the stock which was now pretty low except in the necessary spring trade articles. There was every possibility of a good profitable clean up before the end of the outfit. There seemed to be no end to the work and time was flying.

About the first of May we had cleaned up pretty well. The Boss asked me to make a trip to Winnipegosis and take Mrs. McKenzie and the children with me to see the post, as there was a likelihood that I would be transferred there after I closed out Touchwood.

I had to go to Nut Lake first on an inspection trip. We had a new man there by the name of Chartrand. I got ready, left Slater in charge, and accompanied by my wife and the two little girls went to Wadena on the C. N. R., a drive of about fifty miles. My wife and the children took the train down to Togo, where she would visit her sister until I returned from Nut Lake. On my return from Nut Lake to Wadena I sent my men back with the teams to Touchwood, took the train, picked up my wife and children who had got a good rest by this time at Togo, and went right through to Winnipegosis. There I found letters awaiting me from Qu'Appelle. Mr. George Spence was in charge and was recently married. He was going to be transferred to Fort Alexander on Lake Winnipeg after

the close of the outfit. It was a nice post, a fine store and a very comfortable dwelling house in quite a good sized village, principally lumber and fishing, and some good farms. Mrs. McKenzie did not like it, and I had no particular love for it myself, only I had promised that I would come back and make the transfer after I had closed out Touchwood.

We stayed there for a couple of days, and I instructed Spence to start taking stock at once, telling him I would be back again about the end of the month, when I would expect that he would have all the annual accounts finished.

So we started back again round by Winnipeg and got back to Touchwood in time for the celebration of the Queen's birthday on May 24. I had everything closed out and satisfactorily finished on the 31st of May, and Touchwood Hills Post and all its former greatness had passed away.

We had made up our minds that I was not going to stay long at Winnipegosis, so Mrs. McKenzie decided to stay on in the Touchwood House for a time till I knew definitely what was going to happen. All our furniture and everything was there, and plenty of stuff to go on with for some time.

I started off for Winnipeg and got to Winnipegosis on the 2nd of June. George Spence had everything finished in first class shape and he got away for Fort Alexander in a few days. I had a nice young man in the store, a Mr. Harrison. Trade was brisk, and new goods were coming in for the other posts up the lake, and these I was forwarding as fast as our boats could take them away. By the end of June, I had made a trip to five of the seven posts, had forwarded all their freight and made a report on each of them as well as a report on Nut Lake, together with the monthly statements for June. I posted the bunch off to Qu'Appelle on the 1st of July. The Boss arrived on a vist on the 7th of July. After he had looked over the stores and warehouse he asked me if all the freight had come in yet for the posts up the lake. I said, "Yes, it's all in and all at

the posts." And pointing up the lake I said, "There is our last boat returning from Pine Creek, everything is delivered."

The boat coming in was a new one I had finished building and put in commission. She carried twelve tons and looked fine coming in full sail under ballast. He said, "Mack you have done a wonderful amount of good work for the Company during the short time you have been down here." He told me before leaving that I would be relieved of the charge of Winnipegosis in a few days and he would probably see me in Winnipeg.

On the 10th of July young Alex McDonald, a nephew of the Boss, arrived, and the letters that he handed me from the Commissioner authorized me to transfer the charge of Winnipegosis Post to Mr. Alex McDonald, and to report myself to him at Winnipeg as soon as I could complete the usual transfer.

On the 12th of July, 1909, the Orangemen were parading along the street as I boarded the train for Winnipeg—"Goodbye Winnipegosis."

I met Mr. McDonald at the Empire Hotel, and the first thing he asked me was, had I seen the Commissioner yet. I said no. He said, "You better go over to his office and see him at once, and I will remain here until you come back."

The Commissioner was evidently expecting me. He said he was glad to see me, and we had a short general conversation about Winnipegosis and the transfer of young McDonald, etc. He then told me that he had the authority to appoint me Fur Trade Inspector forthwith, and he would also raise my salary to three hundred pounds, and date my contract back fourteen months. My previous contract had expired about fourteen months before, and I had not signed any since. He told me that in the meantime I better take a short holiday as they had kept me pretty busy for the last few years. "The main thing is I have got you in Winnipeg now," he said, "and you are no longer attached to Manitoba district. The Chief Factor has been persuaded to let you out of his district at last. I did not

wish to oppose him too much, as I knew as well as he did that you were a very valuable man for the Company as well as himself, as long as you remained in his district, but it has kept you back several years from doing more important work for the company, which I hope you will soon be able to start out on now."

He said, by way of ending the interview, "You need not worry about anything, you can drop into the office at any time, and should I wish to see you particularly I can always phone the Empire and let you know. You are staying at the Empire, are you not? And Winnipeg will take care of your expenses for the present."

I pinched myself to see if I was awake or dreaming, but I seemed to be all right, so I got up and thanked him very kindly for everything he had said and done for me, and retired a little confused by the sudden change of events in my already eventful career. The thought struck me on my way back to the hotel, "There you are now. You have attained and obtained your ideal position in the service after thirty-three years hard struggle and devotion to duty." I thought I had paid the price in full, but I was not sorry at that moment.

Mr. McDonald was still waiting for me. He knew what was taking place, and he knew it the last time he was at Winnipegosis, but he wished the Commissioner to give me the first intimation of my new appointment himself.

He rushed up as soon as I entered the hotel and was the first man, outside the Commissioner, to congratulate me and wish me the best of luck. He left for Fort Qu'Appelle that evening, and said he would likely see me again before I left Winnipeg, as he would be down to attend the garden party, that the Company were going to tender the Governor, Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal, at the Lower Fort, on his arrival in Winnipeg from England. The date of his arrival had not yet been determined, but would be very soon.

After a few days I called at the Commissioner's office again, and said, "Mr. Chipman, I might as well go home to Touchwood and see my family, and if you should wish to see me you can wire me there and it will not take me long to get back to Winnipeg." He said, "Why yes. How stupid of us not to think of that. Both your children went up about the first of this month on their holidays. Yes, certainly go up and visit with your wife and family, and I will not wire you unless it is absolutely necessary for you to come down to Winnipeg. Turn in your expenses to the office for the time you have been in Winnipeg and include your railway fare to Touchwood—good-bye, and I hope you will find your family all well, and be able to spend a couple of weeks or so with them before you have to go into active service again."

Mr. Calder was the next man to congratulate me, after the Boss. He was as proud of my appointment as I was myself and we wished that old George Drever was only down there with us, but he was far away at Fort Chipewyan, so we did the next best thing and wished him, ourselves, and all the others of that ilk, good luck, in a big bumper.

The garden party at the Lower Fort came on in due time, Mrs. McKenzie and myself were among the invited guests who were duly presented. All the Hudson Bay people and old timers were there, a big crowd. I had a few words with his Lordship. He said, "I hope you will succeed as well in your new duties as you did in driving us from Qu'Appelle to catch the C. P. R. construction train, and I have no doubt but you will." He also spoke very kindly to Mrs. McKenzie, and we passed on to make room for the next.

He gave a return party the following day at his own place at Silver Heights, as he said himself one day was no use for a reunion of old friends of such dimensions. The crowd was even larger on the second day, and the weather was everything that could be desired on both days. Everyone enjoyed themselves to the fullest extent in friendly banter and recalling

many incidents of years gone past. It was a great gathering of sisterhood and brotherhood without the usual strict formality.

Mr. and Mrs. Chipman were host and hostess at the Lower Fort, and Lord Strathcona's two grandchildren received with him at Silver Heights. Tears of joy were rolling down the cheeks of many of the old timers, on those days, and many of them met then for the last time in this world, still you could not help but feel that it was good to be there, to see such a display of loyalty and affection.

My next stamping grounds were Athabasca and Peace River districts with headquarters at Edmonton, and Lesser Slave Lake Post, the head post of Peace River, as my first post to be inspected.

CHAPTER XIX.

On the 31st of August, 1909, Mr. C. C. Chipman handed me my instructions in a sealed envelope together with a copy of the Rules and Regulations of the service as amended October 18, 1887. I was to report to him direct, making out my various reports at each post before proceeding to another post. I could read my instructions when I arrived at Edmonton, and I would find them all very familiar. They were only an outline of what he wanted done, and in many cases I would have to use my own judgment and discretion, according to circumstances and location, or in other words to go ahead in my own way, giving a true and correct report of conditions as they existed, and to rectify and investigate into all the details of each post and its management, instructing and re-organizing on the spot, where I considered it necessary or expedient in the Company's interests, and beneficial to local requirements.

After having been entertained to an elaborate and well attended banquet, and receiving many other tokens of esteem and affection from all our Touchwood Hills friends, the family with all our belongings boarded a G. T. P. passenger train at Punnichy station, on the 8th of September, 1909, and rolled forward to Edmonton. We put up at the Hotel Cecil for a few days until I found a suitable furnished house on 12th street, which I rented under lease for a year, and moved the family in. We were all very comfortable, and the two oldest children, Annie and Burns, started going to school. I went to the district office, introduced myself to Chief Factor W. I. Livock, who in turn introduced me to his accountant, Mr. McMahon, and all the rest of the office staff of clerks and store men who were then present.

Mr. Livock was a little flustered, but that was only natural. He had received letters from Mr. Chipman that very day which explained my being in his district at that time, I saw a storm rising in his breast and eyes, so I said I would call again to-

morrow, after he had read his correspondence, and talk over things, as I wished to start in as short time as possible for the Lesser Slave Lake Post, and I would feel very much obliged if in the meantime he would get someone to arrange transport for me to that post. We then very kindly wished each other good morning. I knew the saleshop manager, and dropped in to see him, a Mr. Goldsmith, who used to be in charge of the Whitewood saleshop in Manitoba district, also Geo. J. Kinnaird, who used to be in charge of Fort Ellice, but now in business for himself and doing well. Doctor McKay who had recently retired from the charge of Peace River district, and many other old H. B. C. men and old timers, many of whom I had met years before—Edmonton was full of old acquaintances so we were quite at home among old friends again, who were glad to see us. Dr. McKay asked me to call again before I left and he would be able to give me quite a lot of information about Peace River district, that might be of value to me when I got out there. He also told me that his eldest daughter was married to George Harvey, who was then in charge of Lesser Slave Lake Post, and asked me if I would take out some letters and some other small parcels that Mrs. McKay wished to send out to their daughter: Of course I was only too glad to do this, and he gave me a lot of information that I found very valuable all through the district. He was a very staunch H. B. C. man, sound and reliable with first class judgment and long experience in the management of districts and posts, as well as accounts and medicine. He was well up in years then, had a large family, and was very comfortably off at Edmonton. He died a few years later mourned by many and by all very much regretted.

When I went to see Mr. Livock again he had transport arranged for me to Athabasca Landing, one hundred miles from there. He said Mr. Leslie Wood who was in charge at the Landing would arrange my transport on to Lesser Slave Lake, and he gave me a letter to him containing instructions to that effect.

Mr. Livock was well up in years and had not been able to visit the more distant posts in his district for some years, but had sent out inspectors from his own office through the district from time to time. Mr. McNabb was at present in the vicinity of Lesser Slave Lake, and I might make connection with him there. At Athabasca Landing there was a fine store well stocked with merchandise, and a number of large depots or warehouses. It was here that all the freight was assembled during the winter for transport to MacKenzie, Athabasca and Peace River districts. The warehouses were all more or less empty at this time, but the winter freight for up river was beginning to come in from Edmonton.

Mr. and Mrs. Wood, both old timers, were very kind to me. Mrs. Wood was a daughter of the Rev. John McDougall, and a very hospitable lady she was. Mr. Wood gave me without stint all the information at his disposal about the transportation to and from the landing, up the river and down the river to Fort McMurray, the number of teams, scows, men, wages, cargoes, total quantities and time required for trips both up and down the river, as well as inland transport to Lac La Biche and Wabasca. He had everything at his finger ends, about receiving and forwarding freight either by land or water; had studied it for years, and was a first class man to be in charge at that important point. Mrs. Wood would not allow me to get anything out of the store, but made a special box of grub up for me herself, all fresh and nice right out of the oven. She said it was no trouble, that she knew what it was to go on long trips herself. I enjoyed the kindnesses of both very much, and I assure you I thought of them both many times before I reached Lesser Slave Lake where the same class of hospitality was extended to me.

George Harvey, as I soon learned, had gone to school with me in Stromness, and came out a few years after me in the service. He was the son of an old H. B. C. man who had sent him home to Orkney to be educated. I gave Mrs. Harvey her

letters and other parcels from Edmonton with which she was delighted. The doctor had evidently put in a good word in his letter for me, at any rate hospitality was one of the great traits in the characters of all the old time Hudson's Bay people and my share was not stinted.

W. L. Thompson was the accountant for the post and several outposts. McDermot was manager in the trading store and several other clerks. There were large warehouses here also, all up river freight from Athabasca came here, and stored, then forwarded from here to the respective surrounding posts.

It took me several days to make the inspection at this point. Mr. Thompson had all his books balanced and in apple pie order, but there were other details I had to secure from Sturgeon Lake, Whitefish, and Peace River Landing. We sent out a courier to the two posts asking each manager to come in and bring all his books and accounts, and Mr. Harvey and myself started for Peace River Crossing.

This is what they called the Portage It is one hundred miles long. (Some portage!) It was over this portage that all the freight from England to Lesser Slave Lake had to be hauled for the Upper and Lower Peace River posts. Hundreds of tons of hay had to be put up, and about a hundred oxen had to be wintered about the centre of this portage for that purpose. The remains of some of the old stables and hay yards, and dwelling houses are still there as land marks. That work is done now, by railway and steamboats.

Some settlers were coming in to the grand prairie country and a post was established for their convenience. The country round the Peace River looked its best at this time there being some most beautiful scenery and a fine climate.

The posts on the up river are Dunvegan, St. Johns, and Hudson Hope, down river, Vermillion, and Peace River Crossing Post, where the freight up and down the river was again distributed to its final destination for the consumers. Some distance from London, England, to this point, in the old days,

via York Factory, in York boats, carrying straps, portages, canoes, pack horses, oxen, and carts, dogs, snowshoes, and every imaginable manner of transport, but it got there all the same, annually to most northerly posts. We must lift our hats to the men and women who accomplished these wonderful physical feats of fortitude, peace and plenty for future generations.

The men of the Hudson's Bay Company were the ones who did it, and many of their brave acts have never been recorded nor preserved. It was along this trail that many of the gold hunters going to the Yukon or Dawson City during the rush a couple of years before this time, lost their lives. Many of them never reached their point of objective and as many more never returned. I saw the skeletons of a great number of their horses bleaching in the sun. Some of these gold seekers had built huts when they could go no farther, and their skeletons were then lying on the rude bed of round poles that they had erected. I, myself, saw two skeletons in one hovel or shack, and many such cases were reported from far distant points from time to time by the Beaver Indians. These prospectors had all died either of exposure or fever, scurvy or starvation. There were shacks all along the Athabasca River, and if there were any one living there at all they called their place a boarding house or stopping place; but invariably they had nothing to eat. Their partner, they would tell you, had gone somewhere to get some grub, if you stopped there you had to supply your own grub, and leave them enough to go on with if you had any to spare.

I picked up one young Englishman in a starving condition, and in a stage of high fever, on the River bank, a hundred miles from any one. He had had nothing to eat for several days but a little flour and water, and was half delirious. I took him in our boat and kept him alive until we got to Athabasca Landing, where the Sisters of Mercy took him into their hospital, but when I called the following day he was

dead. He had been out from England a few months, and as far as I could find out was of one of the best English families. He was prospecting for gold along the river, but had got lost and could not find his partner again, who he said was also an Englishman and a cousin of his. Poor fellow! His clothes were in tatters, and his bare hands and feet were bleeding when we found him, and would not have lived many hours. He was in perfect agony with pain and thirst, and although he was so near the river he could not reach it, even to get a drink of water. I expect his cousin met the same fate, as there were many similar cases at that time along the Athabasca, Slave and Peace Rivers, of many foolhardy fellows who tried to go through that country and were never heard of again.

I spent a couple of days at Athabasca Landing giving it a thorough inspection, and then went on to Lac La Biche, where Mr. Spencer was in charge. All his Indians were around there, and I had to do a lot of talking to them. After inspecting his Post I proceeded to Lake St. Anne Post, but had to pass through Edmonton, and stayed a few days with my family and also to complete and clean up all my reports that had not already been despatched to Winnipeg. I also received several letters from the Commissioner addressed to me here which required attention. I met Peter Gunn, who was formerly in charge of Lake St. Anne, but had resigned and was now M. L. A. for the Lake St. Anne riding. He was an Orkney man, and Mrs. Gunn was also an Orkney girl. One of their boys had shot himself accidentally when duck shooting, the funeral having taken place only a few days before my arrival. They both felt very badly over it.

There was a large half-breed settlement around this Post. Mr. Sibbald was in charge of the store. He was a first class trader and a good all round Indian man.

From here I went to Onion Lake Post by way of Lloydminster, and I visited the ruins of old Fort Pitt, which were a few miles down the river from Onion Lake. It was at Fort

Pitt where W. J. McLean and his family were taken prisoners by Chief Big Bear and his band of Indians during the 1885 Rebellion, but were subsequently released from their dangerous guardians, nothing the worse for their forced stay with the Indians. W. J. retired from the Company's service shortly after that and has been in the employment of the Indian Department ever since as one of their trustworthy officials, and has paid treaty money to the Indians in Northern Ontario and James Bay for several years. His headquarters are in Winnipeg.

Charlie Garson, another Orkney man, was in charge of Onion Lake. He had a fine store, quite a number of clerks, and was doing a good general business. He also had one or two outposts which were producing quite a large quantity of good fur. It took me about four days to get through the Inspection of this Post. I had just finished and was ready to leave when I received a telegram from the Commissioner to go in to Winnipeg. He wanted to discuss with me some parts of my reports which he had already received, before he transmitted them to the Board in London. I arrived back in Edmonton on the morning of the 1st January, 1910, in time to spend the day and have New Year's dinner with my wife and children. I then spent over two weeks in Edmonton, under instruction from the commissioner, attending the daily fur sales. Edmonton was then the largest raw fur market in America during the trapping season. On the 18th of January I started for Wabasca. I could not get at that Post or its outposts until after the freeze-up. I had to go back by way of Athabasca landing again, and arrived at Wabasca Post about midnight on the 24th. It was here I saw the famous Haley's comet. It looked very fine among the Northern lights. Whoever the comet belonged to, the Indians were very much afraid of it. The weather was very cold for several days, the thermometer registering about 50 below zero. Mr. Griffiths was in charge here, and had a very nice apprenticed clerk from Aberdeen in

his office. The buildings were full and all in good repair, and there was a nice comfortable dwelling house. Mr. Griffiths was married to a daughter of Sheriff Robertson of Edmonton, and had three nice little children. I just inspected the Post, then Mr. Griffiths and I started for his outposts, Trout Lake and Chipewayan Lake. We took two trains of dogs and made good time. I thought of going on to Fort Chipewyan to see my old friend Geo. Drever, but I heard from the Indians that he had been transferred to Abitibi Post in Lake Huron District, Ontario, and had left some time before on the winter packet. We did a lot of travelling and went to many Indian camps between the outposts and beyond them. Here I secured two jet black Siberian wolf skins which the Indians had killed a few days before. This brand of wolf does not generally come so far south, but several of them were killed that winter while trailing a big herd of caribou. They were sleek and prime skins. These wolves had eaten up many a poor caribou before the Indians got them. The Siberian wolves are tall, swift and vicious, and will tackle a man as quick as anything else.

We arrived back at Wabasca on the 3rd of February and arrived at Edmonton on the 10th. I had completed all the inspection of the District except the District office, and had the last of my reports and expense accounts mailed to Winnipeg on the 14th. The reports of this inspection are all in Winnipeg and London, England. I hewed to the line and let the chips fly where they liked. I read my report to each post manager before I mailed it or left his post, so that he knew exactly where he was at, and what he was up against. I gave every one a square deal, and recorded nothing but hard facts.

Chief Factor W. T. Livock retired from the service at the close of the outfit, on the 31st of May, 1910. I was again called down to Winnipeg. Mr. Chipman was leaving for England and would be gone about six weeks. He congratulated me on the rapid and efficient Inspection of Athabasca and Peace River Districts and told me that my reports were most satis-

factory. There were some Posts in Lake Superior District that he would like me to do before I returned to Edmonton, and before the spring break up took place, and he would probably be back from England, about the time I was through with them. I wrote Mrs. McKenzie and advised her of my whereabouts and the next order of business and then proceeded to Fort William, it being the District Office of Lake Superior District; R. D. Sutherland was in charge of the District and I knew him very well. He was very glad that I had come to inspect as much of the District as possible. J. D. Young was District accountant, and Miss May Bilbe was the stenographer I inspected the District Office the next day, then went to Lac Seul, Nipigon, Nipigon House, and Montizambert, Missanabie, and Dinorwic. The spring was open and the Commissioner had returned from England. My reports were very much similar to those I had made on some of the Athabasca Posts, and I had read them to each post manager before leaving his post; but in no case did any one of them ask me to make any alterations. They all said: "Your report is quite correct, and I have nothing to say. It is exactly as you have seen things and as they are at present."

The Commissioner was very much satisfied and said: "Your reports on Superior District carry a great many details that I had no previous knowledge of, but will now give my attention to." He then said: "I have the authority of the Board to place you in immediate charge of Lake Huron District. Your family are still very comfortable at Edmonton, and after you have made the transfer of the charge of the District to yourself, you will have time then to go up to Edmonton, and bring your family down to the headquarters of the District at North Bay. It is very important, when will you be able to go?"

"By tonight's train," I answered.

"Oh," he said, "That's splendid. I will write all letters in connection with it, and mail them to Mr. Sam King, and

also copies of them to your address at North Bay. I will also wire Mr. King that you are leaving Winnipeg tonight for North Bay. You will please send a report at once by wire as soon as the transfer is effected."

At North Bay I made all the necessary transfers, advised all the Post Managers by letter of my appointment, said that I would visit their posts soon, sent a wire to the Commissioner to that effect, and it was all over.

Chief Factor Colin Rankin, who had retired a few years before and had been in charge of the District for many years when the headquarters were at Mattawa and Temiskaming, called on me the following day. A fine old gentleman, he was then well on to eighty years of age, if not more. He gave me very valuable information about many of the Posts, as well as the men in charge of them, and the Indians generally. I told him I was leaving for Abitibi in a day or two, and would visit all the Posts in the District before I settled down in the office. He was a great friend of mine all the time I was at North Bay, and liked to hear about all the men at the Posts every time I came back to the office from a trip. He and Lord Strathcona were clerks together in the service, and he often related many interesting stories of the early days in the Southern Department.

J. T. Herbert was the District Accountant and Miss Ethel Haire was stenographer.

I left them to carry on at the office as usual until I returned which would be some time towards the end of May, before the close of the outfit. I advised the Commissioner by letter what I intended doing. Here was now the opportunity of my life to put in operation throughout a whole District the system that I had practised with such certain results at every Post I had been in charge of.

At Abitibi I found George Drever, David McKenzie, and Willie Ritch (three Orkney men), and several other half-breeds and native servants, all as busy as nailers. Canoes and Indians

were coming in all the time with their hunts, and some of them had large quantities of the finest and choicest furs. The bulk of them only arrived once a year, and then stayed around the Post for a couple of months or so to have a genuine holiday before they started out again early in the fall for their distant hunting grounds. Many of them were fairly wealthy and had good deposits to their credit in the Royal Trust Co. The Priest used to come once a year to meet them, when he would marry, baptize, give them communion, and fix them up generally for another year in the Spiritual workshop. These Indians all dressed in the very finest summer style when they were around the Post. They had trunks in which they packed their clothes, there being a warehouse for that special purpose full of trunks which were all opened up as they arrived, and closed up and stored away again when they departed. They could not take these away with them in their canoes, and they had practised leaving everything at the Post except the necessary hunting material, and their grub. There were thousands of dollars' worth of stuff stored there in this way year after year. There was no charge for storage, and it was at their own risk in case of flood or fire, which up to then had never done any damage, as far back as there were records.

The Indians just handed in their packs of furs, had them checked over and credited to their accounts, found out how much was coming to them, and then drew from day to day against it until it was exhausted. They then took some more debt again for the following year, and everybody was happy.

I had not met Drever for many years, and we had a great many things to talk about, but chiefly Indians, furs and the Company's business. His superannuation had already been arranged for and he was retiring after the close of the outfit. He recommended that David McKenzie be appointed to the charge of Abitibi Post. I took a note of this and had the appointment made, together with an increase in salary.

Willie Ritch was too old to be of any further use in the service, and I induced him to go back to Orkney among his own people. I told Drever to bring him out to North Bay when he came, and I would arrange for his passage home, and also get the Company to grant him a life pension, which would help to keep him more comfortable than he was out here without anyone to look after him. I had circulars with me for each Post explaining in detail the system which I was going to inaugurate in the District, my reasons for doing so, and what I expected each post manager and servant to do. My circular was very explicit and self explanatory, so I handed one to each of the three of them to read. They contained many paragraphs but were quite easily understood. Drever saw the drift of the thing at once, and said: "That's the very thing this and many other Districts want and want badly. It's the only way that you can make a Post or District pay, and I'm right in line to start that today or at the beginning of the outfit as your circular says, and give you all the co-operation I can as long as I am here. I will put David here right on to the thing so that he will be ready to take up the work if he is appointed to the charge of this or any other Post. David quite agreed and seemed to understand what I wanted all right. I explained the circular then in detail until David thoroughly understood every part of it.

At Barriere Post, Mr. Edwardson was in charge.
At Grand Lac Post, Mr. Christopherson was in charge.
At Cochrane Post, Mr. Woodworth was in charge.
At Temagami Post, Mr. Woods was in charge.
At Elk Lake Post, Mr. Haigh was in charge.
At Matchewan Post, Mr. La'African was in charge.
At Metogami Post, Mr. Miller was in charge.
At Flying Post Mr. McLeod was in charge.
At Biscotasing Post, Mr. Train was in charge.
At Abitibi Post, Mr. Drever was in charge.

Those were the Posts in Lake Huron District at that time, part of them in the province of Quebec and the balance in Ontario.

I was back at the District Office at North Bay, early in June, the Annual Inventories from the Posts were also just beginning to come in.

I did not like the conditions or methods that were in vogue at several of the Posts; in fact I would not stand for it at all, and told them so in pretty plain English. I warned them that I would soon be around again and if certain things were not rectified and instructions carried out to the letter, they would have to abide by the consequences. You may think that this was a strange way for a stranger to try and gain the confidence of the post managers in a District. It looks like that, does it not? But it put me in charge of the District once and for all, and I did not have a District Manager in charge of each Post after that. It was sudden and decisive and we all knew where we were at. I gained their confidence and we worked together like brothers, and some of my best friends are in that District today, and may perchance read this and think of our first meeting, and then think of two years later when I left the District, how the scene was changed, and we were all good friends, many of them telling me that they had learned more about fur trade since I came to the District than they had learned in thirty years before, and were able to take responsible positions in any District. That change was worth more to them and me than all the little trouble I had. My most pleasant thoughts today are memories of Lake Huron District where the boys wheeled into line like good fellows, and together we put in a system that enhanced the value of the men and the District. The system we then inaugurated in Lake Huron District is now installed in every District in the country, and has worked out with mathematical accuracy and convenience, and has given results that no other system has ever given in the fur trade. And I started it in Nepapinace's

house at Crooked Lakes and it took thirty years to get it recognized. It has saved and made hundreds of thousands of dollars for the Company and the Lake Huron boys were the first to get it in circular form. I have no apology to offer for this lengthy screed on my pet hobby, it did not cost me the confidence of my Lake Huron boys, but it bound us closer together, and made more useful men of us all, and I don't say I did it, but I say WE did it, and several of you are District managers today, and good ones at that, through that system, which you learned and is now in your blood.

I started for Edmonton in June to bring my wife and family down, leaving Mr. Herbert in charge, closing the annual District accounts for Winnipeg. I received a letter from him every day during my absence, keeping me posted on everything that was taking place in the District. I left my wife and family at Fort Pelly on our way east, to spend a holiday with my brother and his family, and they joined me later in North Bay. The following outfit the District showed much better results. It was spinning like a top, every post doing its share, and all working together towards a common centre. There was also a shake up among Commissioners during this outfit. The Board had decided that the increased business of the Company was too much for one Chief Commissioner to give proper attention to, and created three Departments of Fur Trade, Saleshops, and Land Department. The last of the Chief Factors in active service, Mr. R. H. Hall, was appointed Fur Trade Commissioner. Mr. Burbidge of London, England, Saleshops Commissioner, and Mr. C. C. Chipman was retained as Land Commissioner, but retired the following year. Chief Factor Archibald McDonald also retired, having spent fifty-seven years in the service.

CHAPTER XX.

We were duly advised of Mr. Hall's appointment and were now under his instructions in the Fur Trade. He visited my District during his first year as Commissioner. He was a thorough Fur Trade man, and conversation with him on District and Posts was easy. He thoroughly approved of the system I had inaugurated at North Bay and sent young men from Montreal and other Districts to learn it at my office, and carefully read all my circulars to my Post Managers on the subject. My contract was again out. I signed another at four hundred pounds this time. I also received a bonus of $500 this outfit on top of it, all the Post managers in my District received bonuses that outfit also, in recognition of the good services they had rendered the Company under my guidance. The Commissioner was very well pleased with the results of the District that outfit, as compared with results of previous outfits, and said he would always give credit where credit was due as long as he was Fur Trade Commissioner, and would always reward merit.

My next outfit was splendid. There were good returns at every Post. The system was working like a charm. The Post Managers were all feeling good, old stock was all cleared out, nothing but clean stocks at every Post, and capital invested reduced to a minimum. The business could not be in better shape, and everyone was doing their part, and knew how to do it. We all got a bonus again. Mine was $500.

I was now transferred to the charge of Lake Superior District, and when I got there I learned that none of the servants in that District had received any bonus, and I did not wonder at it. The Commissioner had positively refused to give them any bonus on account of the very poor showing that the District had made for the outfit. They were a lot of sore post managers, and the District did not look good to me, but I was there for the purpose of more hard work, and I was there

to tackle it, so my first crack was round the District to see all the Posts. I knew most of the men from the last inspection I had in the District. They had all heard how well things had gone in Huron District since I had been there, and everyone of them was willing to buckle to, and pull this District in the same shape if I would lead and show them how. The Commissioner had given me carte blanche, and had said: "My only instructions to you are to put Lake Superior District in shape if you can, and the man or men who do it will get the credit for it."

I went to it exactly in the same way as I did in Huron. The men came into line quickly, and at the close of the first outfit the District showed up with the best of them, and every one got a bonus, in fact, Lake Superior has never gone shy a bonus since, and is today, if not the best, at least one of the best Districts in the country.

One of my Post Managers, J. D. MacKenzie, became my assistant District Manager and became District Manager when I left. A. W. Patterson of the Lac Seul Post, was transferred to the charge of Nelson River District and J. J. Barker of Nipigon transferred to the District management of Saskatchewan District. Mr. Christopherson of Grand Lake Post to the charge of Lake Huron District.

Harry Woods of Temagami is now assistant district manager in Lake Superior District. Other Post managers have been promoted within the District. These are all first class men, were all Post managers under me either in Huron or Superior, all learned from me the system of how to make Posts and Districts pay, and are now making their own Districts and Posts pay. It's as easy as rolling off a log when you know how. Any of them who read this will be able to tell you how it is done. The fact remains that it was done to the King's taste. and as I said in Huron District I will now say to you. We, the boys of the Hudson's Bay Company, did it, and are

keeping on doing it. The records of both districts are kept, and these statements can all be verified.

On the 31st of May, 1913, Fur Trade Commissioner R. H. Hall retired and N. H. Bacon from London, England, was appointed Fur Trade Commisioner in his stead, and took charge of the Fur Trade office in Winnipeg on June 1st, 1913. It was also at this time that I signed my last three year contract, at six hundred pounds per annum, with expenses, same as usual, recommended by the outgoing and signed by the incoming Commissioner for the Hudson's Bay Company. Mr. Bacon was the sixth Commissioner whom I had worked under during my time in the service which had been spent entirely in the Fur Trade. Mr. J. T. Herbert who had been transferred at my request from North Bay to be District Accountant of Lake Superior District, also signed a three year contract at this time, with a good increase of salary which was satisfactory to him. I also got an increase of salary for Miss Ethel Haire, our stenographer at North Bay, which I had promised her before I left Huron District. She well deserved it. She worked very hard in the office during my term, was always willing, most obliging, most capable in every way, and quick and neat in her work.

Lake Superior District was now in a very flourishing, paying, and profitable condition. We had larger fur returns this year than ever was recorded in the District before. Our transport service had also been greatly improved from Hudson to Fort Hope under the capable management of A. W. Patterson, Post Manager of Lac Seul, and his able assistant and accountant, Frank Aldous.

I had been to every Post in the District and to some of them several times. To show the interest that many of them took in their work, some of them could repeat all my circulars from memory, and give the date and number of any of them without any hesitation, and they got them at every Post at an average of one a week. Mr. Patterson used to say that he would sooner look over my circulars at night than read the

best novel he ever saw. When he was starting to take charge of Nelson River District he asked my permission to take them all with him, and when I went to York Factory the following year, he had made good use of them, and had every Post in his District working under the same system. He said: "They are just cracker jacks and are as good as a dictionary."

Whenever he did not know exactly what to do about some Post or other, he would just turn up his circular fyle, and he could always get the solution in some one of them, from cleaning stove pipes to taking off a trial balance.

I cannot pass over Mr. Herbert; he is a first class District accountant, and gave me great support and assitance in many ways in the District office, as was also Miss May Bilbe, who was always ready and willing to do some work if she thought I wanted it done, even if it was after office hours. We had a very busy time, and we did not look at the clock very often until the work in hand for each day was completed, and in the Post Office box. I owe them all many thanks for what they did for the Company.

In the fall of 1913, after all the transport and freighting was done, the District set for the business of the following winter and every one at their posts. I applied for and got a few weeks' leave of absence to go out west to recuperate a bit after all my very strenuous exertions of the past few years. I stayed in Winnipeg a few days looking up old friends, then went to Fort Qu'Appelle and spent a week with Mr. McDonald, who was now a feeble, retired old gentleman, living in his splendid residence, with his daughter, Miss Nora, and a grandchild, a daughter of Mrs. Williams.

Sheriff and Mrs. Inkster from Winnipeg called for a few days to visit him while I was there. They all gave me a great reception and we talked over old times from morning till night, and he was so glad that I was doing so well, and was still most interested in all the news about the Hudson's Bay men and their families and affairs generally. I spent a very

pleasant week with them indeed. I then went to Loon Creek to visit Drever and his family on their farm. He was like a fish out of water on the farm. We had a splendid time together for a few days. His girls could sing and play beautifully, and Drever was a great singer himself. I told him all the Lake Huron news. He was greatly pleased, and said: "I told you so, when you were at Abitibi. It could not come out otherwise according to your plan, all it wanted was stern determination, and God knows you have enough of that."

I next went to Prince Albert, and visited Mr. Hall for a few days. He had hardly gotten used to being retired yet, and was as active as ever. He showed me all around the city and was most kind to me during my stay. I started east then and came down to Boulton and stayed with Mrs. McKenzie's sisters and brothers on the farm for a few days, and had a good time. I also visited in Russell. Some of my old friends were still there, but there were many new faces. I then came down to Elphinston and visited David and Mrs. Armit, and Donald McKinnon on their respective farms, which were near each other. I later headed for Winnipeg and Fort William, where I found my own family all well. I was feeling much better for my trip, and had enjoyed myself all the way round, and was glad to get back to work again in the District Office.

There were good reports coming in from all the Posts on the prospects of a good fur season. We had to make a special shipment every January for the London March Fur sales, and every Post Manager had his instructions as to grading, date of shipping, and all other particulars in connection with their individual routes and shipments. I also purchased large quantities of fur every winter at the District office, where I graded every skin before shipping, sending a grade sheet with every shipment to be checked and compared with their grading in London and returned. Of course, grade sheets were also sent from all the Posts along with their shipments and copies of their grade sheets sent to me along with the other papers in

connection with their shipments. Grading of furs and Fur Tariffs had been an annual bone of contention between London and the Commissioner for many years, and it came nearer a solution during the time R. H. Hall was Commissioner than ever it had before. I had given great attention to fur grading for many years, testing the grades in every possible way, both in Canada and the United States fur markets, and values as against and in accordance with grades. Our contention was that they were grading our furs too high in London, as compared with other London fur houses, and in consequence, our valuation tariff was too low, which in turn reduced the apparent net gain of Posts and Districts. For instance what I would grade a No. 1 they would invariably grade a No. 2. I was going into it more minutely this year than ever before, and I was having larger shipments than usual from all the Posts, all graded by each Post Manager and en route for the London Sales by express. I had copies of all the grade sheets, which looked to me that more than an average quality bunch of fur had gone forward from Lake Superior District. After all the shipments from the District had gone forward, I was called to London, England, to attend the Company's March Sales as an expert grader and sorter of all classes of Canadian Furs, and to compare our Canadian grading with that of our London House, as well as other fur establishments in London.

Early in February Mrs. McKenzie and I started for London. I took all the necessary documents with me that I would require at the sales. We met Mr. and Mrs. French, District Manager from B. C., who was over in London for the same purpose. We all stayed at the same hotel. We were about three weeks ahead of the sales, and had lots of time to go over all the furs and show rooms in the city before the sales began. Lampson's and Nesbit's sales were coming on immediately after the Company's, and we had access to all their fur rooms as well as that of the Company's. Mr. N. H. Bacon, the Fur Trade Commissioner, also came over in time for the sales. Mr.

French and I spent about three weeks before the sales examining, comparing, grading and taking careful notes of the quality of the grades in the different houses, and comparing them with our Canadian grading. Mr. Rendall and Mr. Forbes, the Company's brokers and graders, were in the fur rooms all the time, grading and making up the lots for the sales. There was a large staff, as it was a big job, and we had ample opportunity to examine and compare all classes of furs and skins.

My shipments from Lake Superior were in and opened up. French and I satisfied ourselves as to their quality and grade in comparison with all the grades of the other houses, and pointed out many cases to the Company's brokers which they could not refute on a basis of quality. Mr. French and I were practically of the same mind although we had never met before, or discussed this very important question of grades and tariffs, in which we were both vitally interested for the Company. He was an expert judge of furs and grades.

We had finished everything that we could do, and made our report to the Commissioner. We could only now wait and see what the extra No. 1's, 2's, 3's and 4's, and 5 as graded by the various houses would produce at the sales, if a No. 2 at our house, graded as a No. 1 or No. 1 extra at another house, and sold for the same price as our No. 1 London grades? This was the point we wished to make, and that was exactly what happened when the sales took place. Our trip was very valuable to the Company in many ways, and the flat average tariff for valuation in the country has not been used since. Each Post and District gets valuation for the quality and grade of the furs they produce, and the Canadian grading is practically accepted by our London House now. It is a higher grade than any of the London large fur houses that we visited were using as their standard grade at that time.

Mr. Bacon showed us around London and gave us a good time. Mr. Jennings also was very kind, and met us at the station on our arrival and welcomed us to London on behalf

of the Hudson's Bay Company. Mr. Ingrams, the secretary, treated us with great consideration, as also did the Governor, Deputy Governor, and Committee. I met all the members of the Board and was at one Board meeting. Mr. Ingrams told me that my work in Athabasca, Peace River, Huron, and Lake Superior Districts was absolutely satisfactory, and favourably commented on by the Board. We got well acquainted round No. 1 Lime Street, and many other parts of London, where we met many of the best and nicest people in the world.

Mrs. McKenzie and I called upon Mr. C. C. Chipman, who was then resident in London. He was delighted to see us, and asked me about all the H. B. people, and our own welfare. I told him how I had progressed in the service since he retired. He was glad to hear all the news and said: "Well, Mr. McKenzie, you are one that not only knew your work, but did it as well."

"I said: "Thank you, Mr. Chipman, but you never told me that when you were Commissioner."

"Well, he said, "It's a great mistake that many of us make, in not giving credit to a man on the spot, who has won it and deserves it."

We spent a very pleasant half hour with him. We also had many nice visits with our nephew and niece and baby, Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Jeffry Wright, who lived in their own house called "the Orkneys" at Harrow-on-the-Hill. Mr. and Mrs. French had gone for a visit to Ireland, and we did not meet them again, as we went for a visit through Scotland, and on to Stromness, Orkney, where I still have one sister living, and had a good time all round. We returned to London again as per arrangement to see the Board before sailing for Canada. We returned to Canada in May, 1914. I was now General Manager of the Eastern Districts, St. Lawrence, Labrador, Hudson's Straits, Ungava, Nelson River, and James Bay Districts, with instructions from the Governor, Deputy Governor, and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company to

proceed to Labrador, the Straits and Hudson's Bay, and make a thorough inspection of all the Company's Posts and establishments, together with all valuable information that I could obtain regarding the country generally through which I would travel, especially the transportation conditions, facilities, and possibilities, also the ice conditions in the Straits and Bay, together with the general characteristic formations of terra firma at the various points of my inspection, as well as the physical conditions of the natives, and their families, "Indians or Eskimos," that I would meet and have friendly conversation with, regarding their welfare, also obtaining a clear and distinct knowledge of their requirements, that would enable them to prosecute their fishing and hunting avocations with success and profit to as great a degree as possibly could be done under the handicap of Northern climatic conditions, which prevailed, dominated and circumscribed the activities of the natives in their igloos and other habitations in which available circumstances of long standing had placed them.

CHAPTER XXI.

I started on my trip from Fort William in July, taking my son, K. N. Burns McKenzie with me as private secretary, duly under signed and sealed contract for the period and duration of the time required for the outward and homeward voyages. We started by C. P. R. and made our first stop at North Bay where I inspected the District office of Lake Huron District.

Our next stop was at Montreal, this being the Head Office of St. Maurice, St. Lawrence, and the Gulf Posts. The inspection here covered purchasing of goods, packing, shipping, warehouses, office staffs and accounts for over twenty posts. My work beginning to be interesting to others as well as myself. I knew where to put my hand on sore spots, if any existed. After finishing my work there, we left for North Sydney on our way to St. Johns, Newfoundland.

Our purchasing agents and shippers in St. Johns were very glad to meet us, and gave us a good time for a few days, giving me every assistance and information that I required in connection with the Company's business in that city and Port.

The Company's S. S. Nascopie, a large modern ice breaker had just arrived from Spain with a cargo of salt, for the Newfoundland Fisheries, and was then in dry dock, being cleaned and overhauled generally for her northern trip. She was a powerful and strong ship, 265 feet long and 42½ feet beam, one of the staunchest class of ice breakers and cargo ships that has ever entered the Bay. She was requisitioned for duty in the White Sea, and Archangel, on her return that fall, where she did some splendid work. Being fully armed, she also had a crack at a submarine on her way. Captain Mack, her commander, told me that he got the submarine first shot as she was coming round the end of a large iceberg. He saw some of the crew in the water, and said they may be swimming yet for all he knows, as he hove away and left them to their fate.

I inspected the Nascopie in dry dock, and saw her launched, as she had to go up to Montreal for her cargo for the North. I wanted to get to Cartwright on the Labrador coast before any of the Company's ships would arrive there, so Burns and I took passage for Cartwright on one of the Reid, Newfoundland mail, passenger, and freight boats, and sailed north at the same time the Nascopie headed for Montreal. We had a very uneventful and nice cruise along the coast of Newfoundland, calling at all the bays and villages with mail and provisions for the fishermen who dot the entire coast from St. Johns to Belle Isle. We had on board a number of nurses and young students who were going to do voluntary work at Dr. Grenfell's floating hospitals among the deep sea fishermen. They all came from the States, being the sons and daughters of wealthy people, and were really most interesting and good company, out for a holiday.

We had beautiful weather and only an occasional iceberg in sight until we reached Belle Isle, when we met pretty heavy ice and several icebergs quite close to us late in the afternoon, and things began to look interesting, as our boat could not face very heavy ice with any degree of safety, so the engines were stopped, and we retreated all that night. A strong off-shore wind, however, got up during the night, which drifted the large ice field out to sea and we were able to wind our way close to the shore, having fairly good open water until we reached Sandwich Bay, and here was Cartwright, the Head Post of Labrador District.

We were not long in getting ashore. The district manager Mr. Swaffield and his amiable wife and children, together with his staff of clerks met us at the dock, where we all shook hands like long lost brothers and sisters. Our welcome was honest and sincere. We hastened to the dwelling house where all was warm and comfortable and had a drink of hot rum all round, and felt ourselves to be really at home.

Mr. Swaffield and his clerks got their long looked for

mail, but they did not open their letters until they received all the freight from the ship that was consigned to the Post. Then everything gave way to the reading of the letters from home.

The boat we came in on should have discharged all her cargo here and returned to St. Johns, but we heard of shortage of provisions and some actual starvation farther up the coast, so the Captain decided that he would try to push farther up the coast with the balance of his cargo if possible to relieve the immediate hunger and distress of part of the population.

He steamed out of the bay with all our good wishes for his success, but never reached his destination. He got into heavy ice a short distance out, and was forced on the rocks. His steamer was a total wreck and the cargo a total loss. However, no lives were lost and the next boat from St. Johns went up and rescued the crew, which by this time were at the point of starvation. We knew nothing of this disaster until word was brought us by the rescuing steamboat. Such is life along the barren and inhospitable coast of Labrador. The Natives of Labrador are principally Eskimeaux. Farther inland they are long bearded Indians called Mountaignais. They come to the coast only every second year. They are not very friendly and keep farther south, where the climate is not so rigorous, the country being fairly well wooded down towards the forests of Quebec. They sometimes cross the country to the Hudson's Bay, at other times go to the Seven Islands in the St. Lawrence to do their trading, and very often to one of our Posts called North West River, well into the interior, up Hamilton Inlet. This is the Post where Lord Strathcona put in his early life in the H. B. service. The Company's house in which he lived is still standing and is being preserved and kept in complete repair. It is no mansion, but it is there if any of you would like to walk over and see it. His bed constructed of round poles is there also so you can have a good rest if you prefer sleeping on that kind of a bed on your arrival there. The latch string is always hanging on the outside of the door.

The other natives which are principally settled near Cartwright are descendants of a large English colony from Bristol, about the year 1766, by Capt Geo. Cartwright, backed by the wealthy merchants of Bristol with the view of creating a large plantation also for hunting, fishing and trapping.

They call themselves planters to this day. Cartwright made many voyages between England and Labrador transporting his colony across the ocean. His first retinue consisted of Mrs. Selby his housekeeper, two English men servants, eight or ten fishermen and trappers, and a number of dogs of various sporting breeds. Many more joined him in subsequent voyages with their families and they were called Labourers, by the natives, hence the name of the country, Labrador.

On the 12th of August the S. S. Nascopie arrived from Montreal with her full cargo. The S. S. Pelican arrived from England the following morning. It is at this point where the cargoes of all our ships are re-arranged for distribution. The ships part Company here, each one being alloted a certain number of Posts at which to call, and their respective cargoes arranged accordingly. The custom duties on goods from England, Canada or the States are collected here by Newfoundland, which has jurisdiction over the whole coast of Labrador from Belle Isle to Cape Chidley.

After you enter the Hudson Strait the custom duties belong to the Dominion Government and are appraised at York Factory for Manitoba and at Moose Factory for the Province of Ontario. The custom duties of the Company amount to a tidy sum annually on the quantity and class of goods shipped to Labrador and through the Hudson Straits into Hudson's Bay.

The Chief Industry of Labrador is hunting and fishing. The finest salmon in the world are caught along this coast. Some years the catch is abnormal, and there are also lean years. It is a continual struggle for existence 365 days in the year, and the survival of the fittest is personified.

I chose the S. S. Nascopie for my flagship and steamed slowly out of the Bay amidst the general salutation of cannon, and cheers from the crowd assembled at the Fort and along the shore. I forgot to say that there is a good English church and clergyman here, also a Public School, both having a fair attendance. The people are truthful, honest, simple minded and industrious, in their fishing and hunting avocations.

It was on getting in touch with the wireless that we got the first news of the war, which said that there had been a naval engagement and that Britain had lost more than one half her navy. That was all the news we got, and would receive no more news good or bad, until we got in touch with the wireless at Port Nelson.

We now crossed the mouth of Davis Strait which showed nothing but fields of ice in all directions, dotted all over with huge icebergs. There were very few patches of open water. I spent much of my time on the bridge with the captain, watching him manoeuvering his ship through this tremendous ice field, the Nascopie climbing and smashing her way through ice all the way from six to twenty feet thick. Eventually we entered the Hudson Strait between Resolution Island and Cape Chidley. We were now directly on the anticipated grain route from Port Nelson to Liverpool. The straits looked even worse than what we had already come through, so the Captain said: "We will tie up for the night. No ice can get out of Hudson Straits until the Davis Strait ice clears away, and it has to move a long way East and South before the Hudson Strait and Ungava Bay can offer safe navigation."

Our objective for first discharge of cargo was Wilson holme, at the entrance to Hudson's Bay. The Pelican had to do all the other Posts along Labrador, Ungava, and both sides of the straits, all of which Posts I visited and inspected the following year, and went up Fox Channel to within ten degrees of the pole and down to Fort Chimo at the south end of Ungava

Bay in the Province of Quebec. There is plenty of timber, large rivers, and water powers in plenty going to waste since creation first began. A rough country, and I would say highly mineralized, with all kinds of minerals.

North of the Straits in Baffin Land there is no timber, very rough surface, a large inland lake, lots of minerals, iron, graphite, mica, the whole country is full of it, and it will likely remain there for many years to come. At Lake Harbour in Baffin Land, north of Hudson's Straits, the tides rise over forty feet against perpendicular rocks and cliffs which are said by geologists to be the oldest formation of rock in the world.

Davis Strait is over four hundred miles wide, between Greenland and Baffin land. Hudson Strait is approximately one hundred miles wide and over four hundred miles long. It is very deep, and there is no obstruction to navigation except the ice and fog, which is sometimes very dense over the Bay and straits at certain times of the year. Esquimeaux inhabit both sides of the Straits and the entire Baffin Land; but as a rule they do not go far from the coast. Whales used to abound in Davis Straits, but very few have been caught in late years.

Besides the showing of minerals, wolves, white and blue foxes, white bears, musk ox, caribou, walrus, seal and oil are obtained and gathered in, in the annual hunt. Man-eating Eskimos live far inland—away beyond Coronation Bay. The Eskimos who roam the coast have all kinds of traditions about them and their exploits in the long ago. There are missionaries principally Church of England, C. M. S., Roman Catholic and Moravian Missions, at or near all the Posts, and no doubt are doing their share according to their lights in the process and progress of civilization. We had to icebreak all the way through the Straits until we got to the entrance of the Bay, when there was open water all the way to Port Nelson, the ice having left the Bay over six weeks before our arrival at its entrance.

We discharged cargo at Churchill for the Posts in that District, some Indians now and only a few Eskimos. Work was in full swing on the Nelson Harbour, all the previous year's construction having been washed out in the Spring. We landed the Nelson Ditrict Outfit at York Factory, but we went on to Charlton Island in James Bay, and landed the balance of the cargo in the Company's large distributing warehouse. After which the ship headed again for home, with a very valuable cargo, arriving at St. Johns about the end of October. They found no ice in the straits on their homeward voyage, but encountered very rough weather as soon as they left the Bay.

The S. S. Pelican also returned safely to London after making a safe and prosperous voyage, on the route allotted to her charge.

CHAPTER XXII.

I did not return with the ship as I wished to visit several Posts in James Bay District, and could not delay the ship or she might be compelled to winter in the Bay as the freeze-up sometimes comes down from the North with startling suddenness. I stayed at Moose Factory and visited and inspected Fort Albany, Donald Gillis in charge, and Rupert's House, A. Nicolson in charge, using the S. S. Ininew tug. Captain Redfern, who was ditributing supplies to the Posts after the Nascopie had discharged cargo at Charlton Island in the Company's large distributing depot, Mr. Gillis was retiring that year and went out on the Nascopie accompanied by his wife and children, and Mr. Mowat was transferred to the charge of Fort Albany in his stead.

Mr. and Mrs. Nicolson were very kind to me at Rupert's House, as were also Mr. and Mrs. Mowat at Fort Albany. Mr. F. Wilson was District Manager, and Mr. Camsel was District Accountant, and several clerks and other servants were all busy at their various duties. Mr. and Mrs. Wilson and their daughter, Miss Nettie, made our stay with them at Moose very pleasant. Mrs. Wilson was a daughter of the late Chief Factor Lawrence Clark of Carlton, in Saskatchewan, and Mr. Wilson had been transferred from the charge of Vermillion in Peace River District to the District Manager of James Bay District, having headquarters at Moose Factory, where he was giving splendid satisfaction to the Company.

I also spent good and profitable time in Nelson River District at York Factory, with Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Patterson, who was District Manager, but had been previously one of my Post managers at Lac Seul in Superior District, and was making a capital and satisfctory showing at all the Posts in his District.

I saw many of the old servants at York as well as at Moose, and if I did not know all of them personally, I knew some of

their relations somewhere in the country and had some news for every one, either births or deaths or marriages or perhaps a young couple had eloped in a birch bark canoe, or perhaps some one had run away with another man's wife, and many other incidents of domestic, bush and Indian life at the posts and outposts were related by old and young, clerks, and post managers, with detailed accuracy and completeness of description.

Many of the older retired servants had made long and hazardous trips, on the Bay and on the Lakes and Rivers, and were true and loyal to the Company, trustworthy, faithful and honest. They were all Company's men whether they had retired or not. They had spent their lives in the service, and were more or less happy in their old age, with the knowledge that they had done their best as long as they were able to work. Those are the kind of men and women that made the H. B. Co.—and they were still the MEN of the Hudson's Bay Company.

I remained at Moose until it was almost too late to come overland, but Burns and I made the grade, with two canoes and two first class Indian crews up the Moose and Abitibi Rivers to Cochrane, and then by rail to North Bay, thence C. P. R. to Fort William again, in November, having made the complete round satisfactorily and completing what I started out to do.

The annual accounts of Lake Superior District were all completed and waiting my return, and as soon as I signed them and made out my annual report on the District they were all transmitted to the Winnipeg office, and my District Assistant John Duncan MacKenzie's appointment to the charge of Lake Superior District was confirmed, and the post managers all advised accordingly.

I had finished all the reports on my Northern trip, and forwarded them to the Commissioner at Winnipeg for transmission to the Board in London. I spent nearly all that winter

in the Winnipeg office. The war was now absorbing all other topics, and enlisting and training was going on with all the haste that was possible. My son Burns enlisted among all the other boys from the Fort William Collegiate Institute, and took his officer's training in Winnipeg, got his appointment and went overseas with the 52nd battalion. He went through all the horrors of war, was gassed and slightly wounded, but recovered sufficiently to carry on again, and was appointed in London on the staff of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, later sent to Siberia. He was in Vladivostok until after the Armistice was signed, where he gained the rank of Captain, and returned to Canada again when they were demobilized.

There were many of the Hudson's Bay boys who also enlisted from every District. Fine specimens of young manhood physically fit in every way. Many of them never returned to us again, but fought and died like heroes and are lying in Flanders fields today. Many returned with promotions and decorations, while others were practically disabled for life. I will only mention the anxiety and fear that was in every one's breast, as we eagerly scanned the daily casualty lists in the Press. Everyone knows the feelings of emotion that passed through the minds of all, especially those who had dear ones or friends at the front during those horrible years, when civilization hung in the balance and very nearly established the German theory that MIGHT was RIGHT.

The Deputy Governor, Mr. Cunliff, came to Winnipeg in the Spring of 1915 to consult with the Canadian Board and the Commissioner on the Company's business and policy to be adopted during the war. He made but a short stay and returned again to England. I was again deputed to make my second trip to the Bay. We sailed from Montreal this time, down the St. Lawrence to Belle Isle, Mr. Wilmot was supercargo on this occasion and is now District Accountant for Lake Superior District office, at Fort William. We had two brides aboard to be married at York Factory to Messrs. Cummings

and Neale, the District Accountant and store manager respectively. I gave the both of them away to their respective husbands, and they were duly married in the Company's church, in York Factory, by Rev. Ferris, and were ever after happy.

James Watt and his new bride were also aboard. He was going out to take charge of Ungava District, with headquarters at Fort Chimo. We took them the round trip up the Bay when he rendered most valuable service at all the Posts in the matter of towing and lightering with his gasoline boat, known by the name of "Prickly-Heat."

I installed him at Fort Chimo, in charge of Ungava on our return trip, and took home Mr. Hooker and his family, who had been in charge. He is now in charge of Osnaburgh Post in Lake Superior District. They are both first class men and have given the Company good faithful and profitable service.

The Nascopie was the only Company's ship that went into the Bay posts that year, the ice and other conditions were much the same as the previous season. We had to visit every post and had a very full and heavy cargo, a most dangerous adventure for some of the posts if anything happened to the vessel, as we had all our eggs in one basket. We were, however, very successful and delivered the goods to every post on the Bay and in Baffin Land.

Mr. Ralph Parsons was in charge of the Hudson's Strait District, his head post, Lake Harbour, on the North side of the Straits. Mr. Parson's brother was in charge of the post opposite on the south side. Mr. Stewart at Cape Dorset Post, Mr. Cantly in charge of Wilsonholme Post, and H. R. Hall in charge at Chesterfield Inlet. He was a son of the late ex-Commissioner Hall, and a first class man who will yet give a good account of himself in the service, and is now in charge of the Western Arctic and McKenzie River delta, at the mouth of the McKenzie River, out in the Arctic Ocean.

We returned to St. Johns, Newfoundland, after a very rough passage most of the way back. A wire from the Commissioner called me directly to New York, where he than had his office, and was purchasing war supplies for the French Government, which kept him between Montreal and New York all the time, having a large staff in each city.

Chief Factor Archibald McDonald, did not enjoy his superannuation very long. He died the previous winter at Fort Qu'-Appelle in the District he was appointed to as a young clerk, and in which he had gained all his promotions. He never served or was in charge of another District. He was buried in St. Johns Cemetery, Winnipeg. His pallbearers were W. J. McLean, John McDougall, Sam Steele, James Thomson, John Calder and myself, and we laid him to rest beside his wife, in the full hope of a glorious resurrection at the last day.

After returning from New York, I spent some time at the Montreal office, then returned to the Winnipeg office again, after spending a few days with my family at Fort William en route.

I had been to the Bay and Baffin Land Posts, some of them twice, had done the work required of me to the satisfaction of the Company. I had attained several years before this, the ideal position that I had laid out for myself to reach in the service, and was now, as far as my official position was concerned, only second to the Fur Trade Commissioner, and had gained my promotion from the bottom, by merit alone.

I had arranged while in London that I would be allowed to retire when I reached sixty years of age. I sent in my resignation in accordance with this arrangement. It was accepted and I was allowed to retire on the maximum pension, on the 31st of May, 1916, after having served the Company forty years. It was not all plain sailing during these forty years, for any of us who wished to get ahead to more responsible positions. There were many sacrifices to be made, many difficulties to be overcome, many dangers to go through, many

temptations to overcome, many long years to wait, that without a fixed purpose in life would surely drive you to despair and failure. Many young fellows of my own age made a good start, but from one cause or another dropped by the wayside, not for want of ability, but for lack of will power and determination to continue and carry on. This is the moral of my whole story to every young man and young woman starting in life, no matter what line of business you intend to follow, first be sure that you choose a line that you are suited for, then set up an ideal as high or higher than ever you may reasonably expect to reach, use every legitimate means to make yourself an expert in your work, to master it and make it work for you, and stick to it. Don't be afraid to work and turn your hands to anything that is required to be done; don't be continually watching the clock. Pursue your ideal squarely and fairly, if you do not ultimately reach it you will not be very far away from it. Money is not everything, pleasure is not everything, but the knowledge of work faithfully and well done will gain you both.

Take my tip, young people, try it, and you will not be sorry.

Now, my dear reader, friends, comrades, companions, officers, and Men, my book is finished and I hand it to you and posterity for what it is worth. I consider it the crowning work of my life. I have tried to faithfully tell my own story, which I hope you will find as interesting as I have done, when calling up to memory many of the incidents which will remind you of many things that I have omitted. But I cannot omit expressing my greatest appreciation at the numerous tokens of regard, esteem and affection that myself and family, have, on many historic and social occasions, been presented with, and received from, the hearts and hands of The Men and Women of the Hudson's Bay Company.

The End.

"Pageant"

1670—May 2nd.—1920

The 250th Anniversary of the Hudson's Bay Company in Winnipeg.

This celebration was one of the most historical and successful events that has ever taken place in Canada in connection with the Hudson's Bay Company, whose Governor, Sir Robert Molesworth Kindersley, G. B. E., received a warm welcome, and ceaseless ovations from all peoples, kindreds and tongues, as well as the most influential, financial and business men of the city and country, who assembled to greet and welcome him to the Capital City of Manitoba, the great rendezvous of the old timers, who all vied with each other to do him honour, including Lady Kindersley and their son and daughter, who accompanied Sir Robert and shared in all the festivities with great interest and expressed pleasure and enjoyment. Sir Robert is not only the Governor and head of the Hudson's Bay Company but is a man of great financial affairs and recognized premier ability in England and throughout the financial world. He is also one of the Governors of the Bank of England and President of many financial enterprises and institutions in London, England. He has a great and noble personality, firm but kind, painstaking and just, affable, and courteous in a marked degree.

At the staff dinner in the Fort Garry Hotel he was cheered to the echo by over one thousand employees, to whom he spoke very encouragingly and as one of themselves, commending them for their loyalty and faithfulness to the Company, also paid a high tribute to the boys of the service who went overseas, and expressed sincere sympathy with the friends and relations of the boys who did not return again, but gave up their noble lives on Flanders fields. He announced that each employee of all the Hudson's Bay Company's saleshops in

Canada would receive one month's salary to commemorate the celebration of the 250th anniversary. He also intimated that a new pension scheme was being worked out for the Fur Trade, which would put those entitled to pension in a better position than they were at present financially. He also decorated all those present in active service, who had fifteen years' service or over, with gold and silver medals and bars according to seniority.

A modern up-to-date store is also to be erected on Portage Avenue, the building to at least cost five million dollars.

The Pageant on the Red River down to the Lower Fort was something to dream about, and not likely to be ever seen again. Indians from all over the Dominion, in their birch bark canoes and York boats, dressed in materials of all shades and colours, eagles' feathers and paint, representing all tribes and customs for the past two hundred and fifty years. The banks of the Red River were lined for miles with thousands of admiring and wondering spectators, men, women and children. The landing at the Lower Fort, where thousands had congregated was made amidst the booming of cannon in the good old orthodox Hudson's Bay style. The Governor smoked the pipe of peace, which was presented to him, as was also many other beautiful presents of Indian work and marten skins of furs, after which he decorated the most deserving Indians with medals, and presents of pipes and tobacco, and told them this was the happiest day of his life, and he would never forget it or them, also sent kind messages back with them to all the Indians, who had not been able to come so far as some of them had come to meet him. All the Indians and the thousands of others gave him three cheers and a tiger and then some more cheers. His reception by the Indians, the people and the Press was all that a prince of the blood could desire.

The following day he spoke at a Canadian Club luncheon at the Royal Alexander Hotel to over twelve hundred business men and bankers of the city, his subject being the financial

burden of the Empire, and claimed the close attention of every one present, a very able address and very favourably received by those who claim to understand deep financial problems. In the evening he was the guest of honour at the "Old Timers' Banquet" in the Arena of the Board of Trade Building where he again made a great impression on between one and two thousand guests and old timers and received numerous ovations during his most interesting speech. The Lieut. Governor, Premier of the Province, mayor of the city and many prominent officials were his right and left hand supporters, nearly all old timers. After dinner and the speeches were over, the Red River jig and many other old time dances were indulged in, some verging on one hundred years of age participating in the dances of the early settlers. During all the celebrations everything was conducted with the greatest informality and true friendship, many old timers having come a long way to meet the Governor and their friends and relations, many of them realizing that they were meeting and parting for the last time on this earth.

The Governor and his family left at midnight on the 4th inst. (May, 1920) to catch their train for Edmonton to continue the celebrations and pageants at various pre-arranged cities right through to Victoria in British Columbia.

N. M. W. J. McKENZIE.

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